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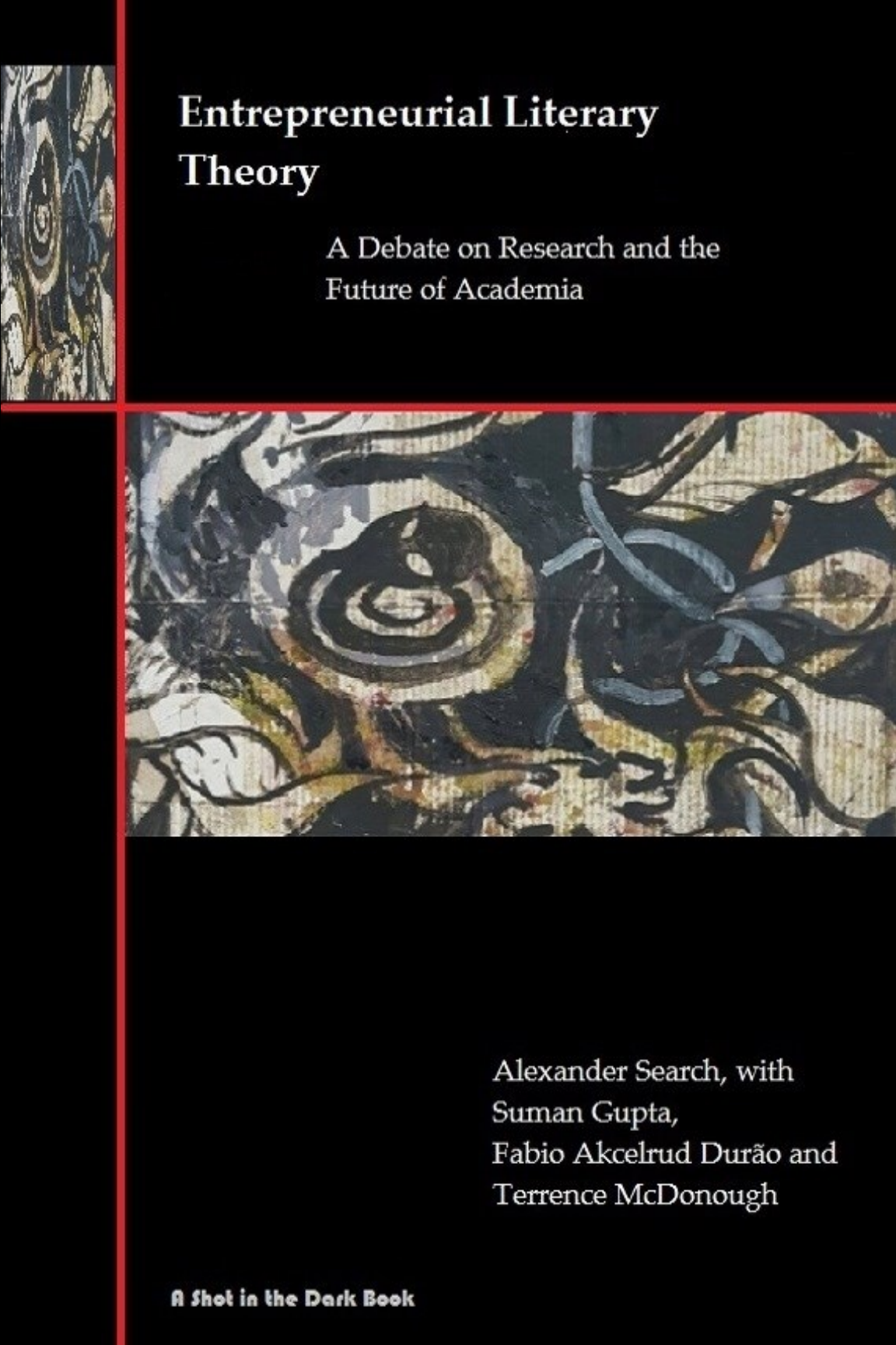
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# Entrepreneurial Literary Theory

A Debate on Research and the  
Future of Academia

Alexander Search, with  
Suman Gupta,  
Fabio Akcelrud Durão and  
Terrence McDonough

**A Shot in the Dark Book**

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**Shot in the Dark**

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# Entrepreneurial Literary Theory

An entrepreneurial spirit has gripped academia. The debate presented in this book is about what that means and portends for researchers, especially those engaged in literary studies.

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# Introduction

An entrepreneurial spirit has gripped academia. The debate presented in this book is about what that means and portends for researchers, especially those engaged in literary studies.

Organisations or individuals are considered to be entrepreneurial when they single-mindedly pursue profits from whatever productive activity they are concerned with. That is the sense in which 'entrepreneurial' is used in the following debate. This definition overlooks some of the conventional nuances of the term, some of its heroic flavour and upbeat charge, the social contribution and creative edge it commonly suggests. This book does not go along with such normative associations uncritically.

The adjective 'entrepreneurial' has followed the noun 'entrepreneur' through several connotative shifts since its appearance in English in nineteenth-century political economy. In his textbook *An Introduction to Political Economy* (1891), Richard T. Ely had paused on what was then still a relatively new term in English:

The one who manages business for himself was formerly called an undertaker or an adventurer, but the first word has been appropriated by a small class of business men and the latter has acquired a new meaning, carrying with it the implication of rashness and even of dishonesty. We have consequently been obliged to resort to the French language for a word to designate the person who organizes and directs the productive factors, and we call such a one an *entrepreneur*. (170)

The shift from 'undertaker' and 'adventurer' to 'entrepreneur' to describe certain self-motivated business functions was evidently led by normative considerations. The idea was to distance those functions from funereal associations and 'the implication of rashness and even of dishonesty.' Ely was keen to give these functions a more celebratory cast, and proceeded as follows:

The function of the entrepreneur has become one of the most important in modern economic society. He has been well called a captain of industry, for he commands the industrial forces, and upon him more than any one else rests the responsibility for success or failure. [...] The prosperity of an entire town has sometimes been observed to depend upon half a dozen shrewd captains of industry. It may be said, then, that the large reward these often



receive is only a legitimate return for splendid social services. Such is the case, provided this reward is gained honestly and without oppression. (170)

Ely's celebratory tone, however, came with a tinge of defensiveness. He protested a bit too emphatically in favour of large rewards for entrepreneurs, and he seemed to be exhorting entrepreneurs to be honest and considerate. There were slight misgivings underneath his general approbation of the entrepreneur's function. He felt that this function was a necessary component of his liberal progressive politics. And yet, though far from being a socialist Ely was not unsympathetic to the labour movement, and he was critical enough of laissez-faire liberalism to be regarded as almost a socialist – he was to leave his position in Johns Hopkins University in 1892 as a result. In his textbook introduction to the 'entrepreneur,' Ely quietly gestured towards the undesirable potential of that role while endorsing it firmly.

Ely's idea of the entrepreneur was of an individual who performs self-motivated business functions, and his slight ambiguity about the entrepreneur seems to leave this individual with moral choices: the good entrepreneur would choose to be honest and considerate, would be possessed of a social conscience. At the same time, given Ely's statist approach to liberal political economics, he felt that this choice needs to be encouraged in a progressive direction by legal or rational boundary setting and a regime of regulation. The idea of the entrepreneur as an individual with authority and moral choices continues to have a hold in the popular imagination (a point that is examined in Part 1, Chapter 16 below; such cross references will appear hereafter in the form I.16). However, in the passage from industrial to post-industrial capitalism – or from classical liberalism to neoliberalism – the entrepreneur has largely ceased to be an individual person, in practice and in principle. The entrepreneur's functions are now more meaningfully attributed to collectives, to organisations or corporations, which operate as individual entrepreneurs in legal terms – as collective legal persons (also a point picked up in I.16). Naturally those functions are realised by individual persons on behalf of organisations or corporations, but these individuals are no longer conceived of as free-wheeling entrepreneurs. Rather, they hold greater or lesser positions of authority as functionaries in the collective entrepreneurial body, and they are more aptly thought of now as 'executives.' There is usually a chief executive at the pinnacle of an organisation or corporation, and this person too is always subject to the separate entrepreneurial interest of the organisation or corporation as legal person. Even in ordinary language 'entrepreneur' and 'executive' do not ring as synonyms, and the individual entrepreneur is now a rare creature, while there are executives galore.

The influence of individual entrepreneurs in the economy has, then, largely been absorbed into entrepreneurial organisations, with entrepreneur functions therein being portioned to employed executives. Insofar as individuals are foregrounded in the political economic sphere now, that is more as being ‘entrepreneurial’ (adjective) in synch with their entrepreneurial organisations and corporations rather than as being autonomous ‘entrepreneurs’ (noun) performing self-motivated business functions. In a way, a screen has appeared between the noun and the adjective, so that the noun-form seems to recede into the background and the liberated adjective-form can be attached to various other nouns. Being ‘entrepreneurial’ has acquired rather a different inflection from being an ‘entrepreneur’: where the latter consists in performing functions, the former now appears more as an inclination or attitude of the mind. The positive norms associated with ‘entrepreneurial’ seem to have been extracted from the activities that defined the ‘entrepreneur,’ and dispersed somewhat vaguely towards characterising a state of mind. This is the sense in which the term ‘entrepreneurial’ is attached to organisations and their functionaries now.

The debate below takes place with reference to contexts – which are gradually proliferating across the globe – where the adjective is attached to the higher education and research sector. In such contexts, speaking of the ‘entrepreneurial university’ and the entrepreneurialism of its managerial, academic and other functionaries is becoming habitual. It does not seem to matter much whether the institutions in question are public or private organisations; it is considered that all such institutions should ideally be profit making. In the dominant discourses of the present, the entrepreneurialism of functionaries in the university, any university, is considered to be an attitude or inclination which realises and concretises the ‘entrepreneurial university.’ Their entrepreneurialism has an upbeat psychological dimension and is grounded in the naturalisation of neoliberal language in academia. Entrepreneurialism thus becomes imbued in the very language through which the university functions and presents itself (Holborow 2015 discusses these moves, with a particular focus on the university in Chs.5 and 6).

These introductory remarks on the term ‘entrepreneurial’ lead into the debate below, which has a concordantly wide remit. It is relevant to the present-day university in general and current practices of research in a broad way. However, the debate is anchored to a specific interest in literary research throughout, i.e. the sort of research that is undertaken as a profession in literature departments within universities and other institutions of higher studies. This anchoring in literary research is more to appoint a bottom line for matters of large import than to focus narrowly on the discipline. Literary research is often regarded as particularly

resistant to entrepreneurial considerations, and sometimes even considered a repository of anti-entrepreneurial convictions. If the less applied areas of academic scholarship, and the humanities in general, seem to be increasingly awkwardly positioned in the 'entrepreneurial university,' literary research is on the frontline of vulnerability. If entrepreneurial expectations can be shown to have a bearing on literary research, then they are highly likely to have a bearing on other research areas in other disciplines to at least that extent.

The debate is presented below in the form of a dialogue, but without pleasantries and asides. The register of the dialogue is not conversational but argumentative; its language is broadly but not heavily academic, and does not depend particularly upon discipline-specific terminology. Arguments are laid out in reasonable detail in every instance, and are considered in a sustained fashion. The dialogue form allows for a small number of debaters to explore specific arguments from contrary positions, with each holding a consistent line. The debate is led throughout by Alexander Search, who considers himself a neoliberal thinker with investments in literary scholarship. He is aware that admitting to being neoliberal will be received with opprobrium and incredulity in some academic circles. He wishes to engage in debate with precisely those who belong to these circles. Search is also keen for his arguments to be considered in their ratiocinative terms and not as the expression of a peculiar personality or temperament. He begins his argument with the statement: 'All literary research is or should be conducted with the ultimate purpose of generating profits for some enterprising sector of the economy; that is, through some corporate or governmental organisation.' This is more than an offhand provocation; it turns out to be the serious opening gambit for an argument which Search develops throughout the debate. Suman Gupta and Fabio Akcelrud Durão take issue with Search's arguments, responding to them at each step – and Search in turn responds to their responses and objections. In political terms, Gupta and Durão think of themselves as within the spectrum of democratic socialism, and both are university-affiliated professionals (professors in the broad sense) with research interests in literary theory. They are both convinced that academic research generally, and literary research particularly, should be disinterested – that is, disinterested in an economic sense, untrammelled by profit-making impetuses. Gupta's and Durão's perspectives on literature and literary research differ in significant ways which will become apparent as the debate proceeds. Dismal Scientist also makes occasional but important contributions to the debate, as a professional mainstream economist who is sympathetic to Search's position and ponders the plausibility of his arguments. Here, Dismal Scientist is the *nom de guerre* of Terrence McDonough, who is a professor of economics but not at all a subscriber

to the dominant economic ideology of the present, quite the contrary. It would be a mistake to identify Dismal Scientist with McDonough; Dismal Scientist is a persona assumed by McDonough in this debate. There are also a couple of thoughtful interventions by Leandro Pasini, a scholar of literary theory and history.

The dialogue is presented in four parts, each with a number of short chapters. A chapter is usually by one debater and lays out a particular argument; occasionally one debater takes up a series of chapters; at times a chapter consists in shorter exchanges between two or three debaters. Arguments and counterarguments alternate through the chapters. The first part ('Panoptic') works through the core terms and basic principles in question, and clarifies the debaters' positions relative to each other. The lengthier second part ('Knowledge Production: The University') considers the institutional dimensions of knowledge production at present, and details the implications for literary research specifically. The third part ('Scholarly Publishing: The Monograph') addresses the current condition of academic publishing, with a particular focus on the future of the research monograph. The changing parameters of the relationship between authors and publishers, and the implications of open-access publishing are explored. The short fourth and final part ('Leadership') speculates on the possible contribution of literary research to thinking about leadership and leadership education – that is, the role of executives as outlined above.

Debates do not necessarily lead to firm conclusions and prescriptions; they could end with unresolved differences. This debate ends without differences being resolved, but with, perhaps, some light being thrown on questions and demands which are now pressing upon academic work with intensifying urgency.

# **I. PANOPTIC**

# 1. All literary research is ...

## *Alexander Search*

All literary research is or should be conducted with the ultimate purpose of generating profits for some enterprising sector of the economy; that is, through some corporate or governmental organisation. I do not mean that literature itself should necessarily be commercial – that fiction, drama, poetry, etc. should be understood in terms of how well they perform in the book market. The commerce of literary (book) production and consumption is not the focal point of my argument, it is an ancillary matter. The focal point is *literary research*: that is, the sorts of activities that are considered research in Literature Departments in universities and other such institutions. Literary research is work that various persons are employed to do in academies: students, especially graduate; and professors at various grades (in the broad sense of professing a discipline and being professionals in the academy). This work could invariably be profit generating, in tractable financial terms, and usually already is so – despite a prevailing reluctance to regard it as such.

I will make this argument here from two directions: first, by explaining why this is a worthy and necessary way of engaging with literary research; second, by detailing how profit-making works (or could be made to work) for specific areas and methodologies of literary research. Admittedly, it is extremely rare for literary researchers to consider their work as purposively for financial profit, and I have not come across any who admit to working for that end. In fact, the impulse of profit-making is usually regarded with suspicion by literary researchers, and talking in favour of it is considered not quite done; talking against it is *de rigueur*.

That a salient, not to speak of ultimate, purpose of literary research should be profit-making is likely to be a sticking point for many of my scholarly readers. Literary scholarship seemingly subscribes to various kinds of higher calling, more exalted than the dry business of making money. These scholarly approaches include some combination or variant of the following:

- The study of literature develops our understanding of cultural specificities (such as, of specific language spheres or of nationalities)

and of the universal dimensions of human culture. The cultivation of such study encourages social advancement by carefully tracking histories of particular and general cultural expressions. This could be considered a *philological view of literary scholarship*.

- Research into literature enables the development of self-understanding, much in the way Hegel articulated ‘self-consciousness’ (especially 1977 [1807], Ch.4). Since literary texts reflect or construct various aspects of human existence, the critical contemplation thereof clarifies personal, and therefore collective, aspirations – broadly the aspiration of knowledge itself. We may think of this as an *idealistic approach to literary research*.
- Literary research hones the critical and therefore the moral faculties and helps readers to be good citizens. Literary texts are case studies in facets of human experience and the nuances of human expression; the study thereof clarifies the responsibilities of each and all, and enables appropriate conduct and mutual regard. This is often regarded as a *liberal-humanist approach to literary scholarship*.
- Literary texts – like any cultural form – contain, convey and mould the political (ideological) convictions of a given society at particular historical junctures. Researchers use them as vehicles for understanding the history and present condition of politics. More importantly, such research can then make useful – critical and progressive – political interventions by discussing literary texts carefully. I think of this as *politically conscientious literary scholarship*. Much contemporary research is of this sort.
- Possibly the most widely held view is of literary research as a secondary activity, devoted to accentuating and appreciating the insights that are found in the primary literary texts (works of fiction, poetry and so on). Those insights are often too complex to be immediately grasped; literary researchers tease out and crystallise those insights without altering them. They illuminate and celebrate (and sometimes obfuscate and denigrate) the experience, wisdom, pleasure of literary texts. Research then is a kind of prolonged contemplation of the qualities of literary texts: *literary research is a secondary process of appreciation*.

In sum, the purposes of literary research are: for the *philological view of literary scholarship*, discernment of cultural specificities and universalities; for the *idealistic approach to literary research*, the development of social and individual self-consciousness as knowledge; for a *liberal-humanist approach to literary scholarship*, moral improvement; for *politically conscientious literary schol-*

*arship*, critical and progressive political intervention; for *literary research as a secondary process of appreciation*, (affirmative) contemplation of the insights found in primary literary texts. Obviously, these approaches and purposes are phrased here in an excessively summary fashion and overlap in practice. The careers of each strand are complex and incorporate a great number of publications, too numerous to list meaningfully.

If, as I think, politically conscientious literary scholarship is currently dominant in academic circles that is because it casts doubt on the probity of other perspectives. Politically conscientious scholarship is itself a heterogeneous formation, usually characterised by some aspiration to egalitarianism or championing some just cause on behalf of the marginalised (e.g. on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class and so on). Politically searching examination of philological, idealist, liberal-humanist and appreciative literary scholarship has often found that however high-minded and seemingly all-embracing their precepts, in practice and implicitly these perpetuate dominant interests and prejudices and are designed to maintain inequities of various sorts. A somewhat defensive argument that can be made in favour of profit-making literary scholarship is that it is no more compromised and compromising than most of the above-named approaches now appear to be. It aligns research practices to a key driver of capitalist economies (profit making). That makes literary research as just or unjust as the currently dominant economic environment it works within, and has the merit of being upfront and clear about its place therein. It offers no subterfuge of righteousness to distract from the realities of its social grounding. Glib moralistic denunciations of profit-making in itself (in favour of altruism, selflessness and so on) are usually no more than shallow religious sentiments, which have no place in scholarly work.

My more serious argument in favour of profit-making literary research is somewhat different. Of the above approaches to literary scholarship, the philological and especially the politically conscientious have occasionally registered the commercial dimensions of literature. That has usually involved analysing literary production, circulation and reception and their history in terms of material culture, print culture, commodity culture, mass versus niche markets and readerships, intellectual property regimes and so on. Thereby literary texts are interpreted as variously encoding (more or less covertly) the relevant cultural mores, and as materializing and being valued in commodity form (books, serial publications, e-publications, etc.). Cultural and real capital are thus seen as invested in literature – the object of study – in complex, context-specific and ideologically determinate relationships. However, the economic perspective that occasionally attaches to literary texts as objects of study do not extend to the conditions of study itself, to the economic and institutional structures of literary research. All the dominant approaches to literary research briefly outlined above seem



to be designed to elide the economic conditions and infrastructure of their own production; each of them appears as a selfless encounter of pure critical intellection, untouched by finance or enterprise, invisible to tractable investment and returns, mediating between social world and literary texts. Literary research seems to emanate as *indifferent* to or *irrespective* of the economic structure of the academy, the conditions of the researcher's work, the means of publication and publicity, the account book of academic production and its commercial underpinnings. A moral high ground attaches to literary research being professed as if it were not a profession in the ordinary sense, as if it were uneconomical moral or social or cultural service, a sort of altruistic vocation.

But literary research is – and has been for as long as there have been universities or patronage – a profession: subject to wages, contracts, infrastructure, work hours, institutional settings, and tied in with state and corporate investment, and webbed into a range of commercial sectors. Literary research is overwhelmingly the work of students (apprentices) and professors in institutions. It seems impossible that the conditions and resourcing of this work would not impinge upon what that work produces. If that work is regarded as intellectual, it would be disingenuous to deny the influences of conditions and resources on intellection – that would be a kind of distortion of research. Within literary research, however, the denial of the conditions of research production seems almost absolute. The work that literary academics do in real terms, in their spaces of employment, as professionals, has been conceptualised within literary research very indifferently. For such research in English Studies, with which I have a slight familiarity, only two references come to mind: Richard Ohmann's *English in America* (1976) devoted some space to examining what professors in English departments actually do (backed up by analyses of administrative documents); in a more sustained fashion, Evan Watkins's *Work Time* (1989) discussed the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and disciplinary work.

If appropriate professional conditions and resources are needed for literary research to develop and maintain its integrity, then, of course, it is incumbent on literary researchers to factor those considerations into what they do and what they produce. If those conditions and resources need to be generated through literary research, and justified by literary research, then it becomes necessary for literary research to both consider its relationship with entrepreneurial strategies and to become entrepreneurial. It is arguable that, to some degree, that has been the case for long (it is just a matter of reconsidering literary history accordingly); it seems evident that that is more than ever the case now (in the present condition of academia globally). It is, in fact, more than probable that literary research is already

## PANOPTIC

largely an entrepreneurial activity – but reluctant to say so, hiding its entrepreneurialism behind approaches such as those bullet-pointed above. Those approaches, and the careful elision of their economic underpinnings, might well be established entrepreneurial strategies themselves.

## 2. Counterarguments

*Suman Gupta*

Alexander uses a curious ploy above which I am suspicious of. He slips in 'politically conscientious scholarship' as a fourth bullet point among other approaches. It appears as if substantially at a similar level as the others, as if more or less equally valid or considerable. In his argument that means 'equally dismissible.' And yet, he then suggests that the other approaches have been undermined by it. In fact, his 'weaker argument' in favour of entrepreneurial scholarship is that such scholarship is no more culpable than the others as far as the politically conscientious approach goes. There he seems to be pleading particularly with politically conscientious scholars. This is an interesting conundrum: he dismisses the political verve of scholarship and yet accords it extra recognition.

In fact, his way of phrasing the political verve of scholarship is itself laden with dismissal: dubbing it a matter of 'conscience' sounds vaguely normative, whereas much politically informed literary scholarship is a matter of reason, evidence and living in the material world.

So, I suspect that Alexander is going through these manoeuvres to depoliticise his own approach, to present it as pragmatic and somehow so obvious as to be unavoidable and unquestionable. He places his arguments outside political critique, immunised by having politics put away into a pigeon-hole. That is obvious when his ultimate argument turns out to be: we must become entrepreneurial scholars because that is the way the world is, that is especially the way academia is now. Alexander's position calls for unquestioning acceptance of the given status quo (in academia, in the world now), which is not to be challenged or changed. And this position, which appears to put the status quo outside question, is obviously Alexander's all too *political* position, which he knows and is yet so careful to conceal the political character of.

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Amongst the justifications for working with or on literature that Alexander gives, one is missing: namely, pleasure. Doing things with good texts (and we can think of them as good retroactively, if they generate nice discus-

sions) is joyful. That could work as a justification in its own right. Alexander might say: 'But these are weak grounds; society would never fund literary studies on this basis.' If in the midst of so much wealth, society cannot afford that, there is something wrong with it and it must be changed. Then, the political justification which Alexander tries to debunk becomes legitimate.

The claim that literature is just any other kind of business undermines its right to exist. Without any appeal, however ideological it may be, to some kind of intrinsic being (and I do not say anything about 'value,' which is an unproductive word), literary objects become devoid of meaning because they are useless. How can one justify reading a novel when one could be improving oneself by reading self-help books? And if one grants that humans are not machines and need time to relax, why waste one's brain with a sonnet if one can watch a movie? For Alexander's position, since he would not go so far as decreeing the end of literary studies (he is no philistine), I think it would be better to concede literature's claim of not being useful, so that it does not need to be incorporated in entrepreneurial discourse.

As for the claim that universities should be just like other institutions surrounding them, there are two possible rebuttals. First, universities are culturally residual in Raymond Williams's sense, containing elements of past social formations which cannot be contained within the dominant formation of the present: 'no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention' (Williams 1977: 125). Literary Studies in Brazil is still very much connected to nation building, the impetus of an earlier phase (cf. Readings 1997). This lagging behind could in itself become a kind of resistance that undergirds social criticism. Second, we could try to imagine what would happen if culture were *totally* commodified. It would become something else rather than cease to be.

### *Alexander Search*

I do not understand much of Suman's and Fabio's counterarguments.

Suman's demand that I announce a political position, his implicit way of pushing me into one, seems very much like pigeon-holing to me. I am not aware of having a stable and clear and singular political position (especially irrespective of literary research), though I am aware of having political interests, and am even aware of being unaware of some of the political interests I am subject to.

Fabio's idea that pleasure in reading a good novel is above or anterior to social and economic considerations appears to me a curious mystifica-

tion. Pleasure in reading is often produced by, and the goodness of literary texts identified through, entrepreneurial initiatives and commodification processes. Pleasure is generated in and enhanced by being captured in some productive process, within socio-political and economic structures. I do not share Fabio's contempt for reading self-help books or watching films relative to his reverence for reading good literature. I do not have that kind of faith in the integrity of the latter. Fabio's talk of 'rights' leaves me baffled: 'joy as a justification in its own right,' 'the claim that literature is just any other kind of business undermines its right to exist' – who is according these 'rights'? The notion that there is some kind of literary quality and pleasure which is *a priori* seems suspect to me. In fact, I doubt that literature can be said to exist prior to a literary industry.

### 3. The Tricky Anteriority of Literature

#### *Alexander Search*

The most effective trick that is pulled off by the literary establishment – authors, educationists, researchers, publishers, publicists, programmers and film/theatre producers, culture ministers/bureaucrats, etc. – is in pretending that something cohesive called ‘literature’ is already out there awaiting the attention and encouragement of the literary establishment. In brief, the literary establishment seems to draw its *raison d’être* from the precedent presence of literature.

Thus, literary researchers usually go along with the assumption that ‘literature’ is the object (sometimes ‘area,’ which is within what I call ‘object’ here) of their study, constantly appearing first and awaiting their critical attention. They then describe literature as such. Various ways of describing this object in-itself are accordingly enlisted:

- Literature can be described in terms of its component parts, such as ‘genres’ or ‘forms.’
- Literature can be described by breaking it down according to incidental circumstances, like the ‘nation’ it appears within or the language/period in which written or the themes addressed.
- Literature can be described by differentiating it qualitatively from other objects of study which resemble it in being mainly constituted through texts/performances. So, its textual content is differentiated from other objects (like historical records, political documents, philosophical/theological treatises, news reports) in nebulous qualitative terms like ‘creativity’ and ‘stylistics’ – which convey the impression that a boundary has been put around the object ‘literature.’
- Boundaries can be suggested around literature by selecting the most (politically or aesthetically) representative or worthy from a textualized plethora, and holding that selection up as the object ‘literature’ – placed within a ‘literary canon,’ or as identified in a ‘literature curriculum.’ Usually, the object thus demarcated is then named as ‘literature’ with some conditional adjective: fracturing into ‘English,’ ‘Brazilian,’ ‘working-class,’ ‘seventeenth-century,’ ‘feminist,’ and so

on, or coagulating into World or Global. ‘Comparative’ is unusual as a conditional adjective in highlighting method rather than content: it assumes that literature as object is already disposed in bounded bits which can be compared with each other.

Each of these object-like descriptions of ‘literature’ seeps into the others in ways that reiterate, so to speak, literature’s objectness. Thus, bids to expand the ‘literary canon’ or interrogate the contents of the ‘literature curriculum’ turn out to be ways of reifying the practices of selectiveness and representativeness to maintain literature as object. Wondering whether the study of literature should not extend to bestsellers, genre fiction, children’s stories, biographies (‘life writing’ now the preferred term), films and e-texts, oral recordings and even philosophical treatises and historical narratives and so on comes with anxieties about loosening the boundaries of literature or satisfaction in redefining those boundaries. The objectness of literature, fluidly cohesive and variously bounded, for searching (researching) attention persists as a preconceived notion.

With the preconceived objectness of literature preceding it, literary research can then accordingly describe itself as having an after-the-fact integrity. Such integrity is describable as scholarly methods and principles, occasionally as a self-reflexive (self-interrogative) pursuit, along the lines of the bullet-pointed approaches in I.1 above (“All literary research is...”). A consensual critical language (discourse) naturalises this relationship between the object ‘literature’ and the vocation ‘literary research’. It works rather like Alvin Gouldner’s neutralised Culture of Critical Discourse (CCD), as: ‘an historically evolved set of rules, a grammar of discourse, which (1) is concerned to *justify* its assertions, but (2) whose *mode* of justification does not proceed by invoking authorities, and (3) prefers to elicit the *voluntary* consent of those addressed solely on the basis of arguments adduced’ (Gouldner 1979: 28).

This preconceived way of understanding ‘literature’ as object of study, and literary research as consequently attending to that object through various principled approaches, misses something obvious. It fails to register that economic, and particularly commercial, imperatives constantly delineate the remits of both what is considered to be ‘literature’ and what is pursued as ‘literary research’ – in increasingly tractable ways, clearly tractable now. In fact, the above assumption of literature’s anteriority may be designed to evade that circumstance, to studiously disregard it. With that assumption, literature and the study thereof always seem to be driven by self-contained aesthetic and ethical imperatives (including ethical in a political sense – but is there any other sense?), as matters of changing

tastes and human progress, as determined choices made by *litterateurs* who know better or best. The economic imperatives are elided.

A more plausible way of considering this business might be: *all literature is produced by the literary establishment, in terms of the latter's authoritative and authorizing power structure and corresponding economic arrangements*. Literature is posterior to the literary establishment. Let me be clear about what I mean by 'literary establishment.' This does not designate the establishment that appears because literature exists, but because it makes literature exist as such. The establishment causes literature to be manufactured and consumed and studied as such. I might as well say: 'a prevailing political and economic establishment' wherein literature appears; but here I am interested in that only insofar as it bears directly upon the production of literature, hence 'literary establishment.' In this sense, the 'literary establishment' precedes that which is thought of as 'literature.' Simplistically then, everything that describes 'literature' arguably follows according to the entrepreneurialism of a pre-existing literary establishment: e.g. the canon is that establishment's branding device; claims of moral improvement or social progress or cultural achievement its publicity strategy; specialist interpretive practices are ways of maintaining market-distinctions between owners, workers, consumers; resistant or radical literary ideas are symptomatic of new and competitive entrepreneurial entities.

There might have been some original point in history (literary history) when literature simply appeared in pristine valuable-in-itself form for the attention and management of the literary establishment – but I doubt it. I am unable to think of any such moment, supported by evidence. Every case of the emergence of something designable as 'literature,' or as some kind of literary text, seems likely to be conditional to the establishment wherein it became visible to a social (not to speak of critical) gaze. The modus of any kind of collective visibility is the structure of the establishment, a passage paved through a prevailing rationale of power and its economic arrangements, embedded in institutions. Leisure and resistance are defined by these arrangements too. I say this tentatively and sweepingly for a long view of history; of course it needs to be tested out with specific junctures of literary history in view.

For the short view of history that informs the current literary establishment, I feel more confident of this asseveration. In the present ... in steps gradually since the eighteenth century as the structure of the modern university, the modern intellectual property regime, the modern technologies of text (cultural) production and dissemination, the parameters of nation-state ideologies and supranational conventions, the convergence on capitalist economic organisation were firmed up ... the entrepreneurial impetus which drives the literary establishment to *produce* literature and



then stretch or contract its purchase – always tractably for profit – seems to me a demonstrable business. In fact, I hope this discussion will gradually pull such demonstration together.

Literary research is now very largely undertaken by professionals (broadly, professors) in the institutional setting of the academy, a part of the literary establishment. The professionalisation of this part of the establishment, and of a discipline of ‘literary research,’ since the eighteenth century has been prolifically investigated (with a wide scope and recently, for instance, in Turner 2014). Literary research plays a key role in producing and modifying what is designated as ‘literature’ by its entrepreneurial calculations, to generate profits for some sector of the economy and to sustain itself. Literature is produced and understood and examined accordingly. Literary researchers do not play an exclusive role in this; authors, educationists, publishers, publicists, programmers and film/theatre producers, culture ministers/bureaucrats etc. have their parts too.

Literary research is unusual among entrepreneurial activities in studiously hiding its entrepreneurialism, in being vehement about denying it and hostile to the suggestion that it is entrepreneurial. The presumed anteriority of literature outlined above is a strategy to disinvest from its entrepreneurial character while being entrepreneurial. Paradoxically, literary research also has, as a knowledge formation, the mechanics of revealing its entrepreneurialism and embracing it proactively for the greater good of present-day economies.

That is my thesis. Demonstration of this and capitalisation on this involve less evasive and self-denying literary research, and more attention to economic considerations.

## 4. What is the Literary Product?

*Leandro Pasini*

Curiously, Alexander does not describe the product with which profits should be generated in putting literature as posterior to the literary establishment. If one is to generate profit with literature and literary research, how is one supposed to present this product – profitable literature – to the market? The fact is that the literary market already has its profitable literary ‘objects’ or texts, is it not? What should the professor do? Should she transform the object of study in order to make it similar to what is already considered profitable literature (turn Joseph Conrad into Stephenie Meyer, for example)? Should she turn it into a new product, more profitable than its market contenders? It seems to me that to absorb literature thoroughly in the logic of exchange value, the literary researcher needs to say something meaningful about the *literary* texts. Alexander’s argument really generates more problems than resolutions for profit-making purposes. Reading a difficult text (of the literary canon, for instance) may push the researcher (and the consumer) from the logic of profit to the logic of literariness. Alexander ought to assume that a literary text does have a rationale of its own, as literary, and that this rationale is not wholly congenial to markets and profits.

Therefore, the challenge is: to be a product, a text must be read. Then, the second challenge is: once read, would all the texts produce the same effect? If these challenges are worth considering, you might agree that the concreteness of a literary text is not the same as the abstract concept of ‘literature.’ Perhaps it is easier to think of generating profits with the abstract idea of ‘literature’ than to do so by considering people who actually read texts.

*Alexander Search*

Leandro: products seldom appear in the market *before* the industry that produces them.

I understand that you are arguing for the anteriority (precedence, primacy, beforeness) of literature in terms of ‘reading texts.’ Everything

must stem, you are saying, from reading texts; any professional scholarship, enterprise, profit-making can only follow from that.

I am reminded a bit of that debate between Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish about the mechanics of reading in the 1980s (Fish 1989, Iser 1989). There was Iser saying (through the 1970s), always with reference to soundly canonical literary texts, that the mechanics of reading can be understood in terms of what happens within the texts, what is encountered by the reader therein: what gaps are left, what blanks need to be filled in, what associations are possible and so on. Fish argued instead that actually quite a lot has to happen *before* a reader can encounter a text in a meaningfully readerly manner: some consensual reading strategies need to exist before a text can be read in a way that makes communicable sense. And when it comes to the professional business of criticism (literary interpretation), which is all about making communicable sense of texts, this is particularly clear. What happens in literary criticism is the deployment of interpretative strategies which are sort of pre-agreed (through socialisation and education) by an 'interpretive community' (which thereby affirms its academic-community character) *before* texts are encountered.

I find myself a bit in a Fish-position (and indeed Fish was exemplary in contemplating professional practices, the pitfalls and responsibilities of professional correctness). I am also pointing to the pre-agreements (before reading texts, being producing literature) of an 'interpretive community,' but with some further nuances. This interpretive community does not exist in a vacuum. It exists amidst an economic and political context. Its pre-agreements and self-constitution are designed to enable its survival in that context. It therefore works so as to, and collaborates with other communities so as to, ensure its security and growth. This means that its communal and public activities, even its very encounter with texts, have to be such as can function within given economic conditions.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

As a good neoliberal, Alexander is right to insist that the idea of literature lacks substance. Not long ago, many felt that this position is one of resistance. Literature is an agent of repression; it is part of a baleful ideology that endorses the worldview of the dominant elite: male, heterosexual whites. Those advocating this position saw it as their mission to demonstrate that literature is simply a convention, not at all incompatible with Fish and his interpretative communities. Literature should represent the new voices of neglected groups; precisely because literature has no *a priori* import, these new voices deserve a place of their own. There are two main problems with this position: (a) it involves a regressive, pre-aesthetic

stance, whereby the empirical author is identified with the narrator of the work; and (b) it disregards any objectivity that may arise from the literary form, from the principles of composition.

A further problem is that of proportionality: what groups should be represented and how regularly? From this perspective, the professionals of literature should be demographers with competence in statistics. They should be able to propose algorithms that could translate all social groups into perfect narrative equations. We can see from this how easily, once literature becomes a free-floating signifier, it turns into nothing but a commodity. Thus, my first claim: divesting literature of an intrinsic meaning, far from being a challenging gesture, is a precondition for it to become a properly sellable object.

One does not need a monolithic definition of literature to work with and upon it. There is no problem if the concept changes – if a given text is considered literary at a certain time, and not 50 years thereafter. Literature may be seen as that which produces certain effects which can be presented in effective arguments. Ultimately, Alexander confuses judgment with substantiality. It does not follow that for one to distinguish texts, one has to appeal to absolute empirical foundations. Judgment may conceive of itself with differing degrees of contingency and accept its provisional character. At the very least it will have to see itself as valid as long as another, more binding, argument does not appear. As in other fields, such as international trade, Alexander's argument for the absolute equality of texts is just an excuse to camouflage existing inequalities. The levelling out of texts is an effective means for promoting those which are economically stronger, supported by a more powerful advertisement apparatus.

## 5. Are These Serious Arguments?

*Suman Gupta*

After some hesitation, I decided to take Alexander's arguments seriously, though I regard his leading claim in I.1 ("All literary research is...") to be absurd. Two considerations weigh in for me.

One is that his arguments present a curious performative contradiction. In writing these he is not *being entrepreneurial*, at least not insofar as I am able to discern yet. His argument does not seem to be motivated by a desire to advance himself or serve some employing organisation. He appears to be championing the conceptual principles of entrepreneurship in literary studies in a disinterested public-spirited manner, simply for rational clarification. In my experience, this sort of thing is usually a covert operation precisely for some quite specific profit-making interest, and I am waiting to see whether and when that becomes apparent.

The other consideration is a broader one. Alexander is right insofar as he observes that in the present-day university, in Britain (where I am employed) and elsewhere (according to report), business enterprise is the guiding principle of governance in largely *untheorised practice*. This has been prolifically examined in critical accounts of the neo-managerialism, financialisation, neoliberal practices that are being systematically embedded in the administrative order and academic life of universities. Entrepreneurs have taken over universities and are converting (or coercing) compliant souls therein into entrepreneurial functionaries and morphing universities into corporations – all without bothering to explain their view of the world themselves. It is left to their hapless, and largely uncomprehending, victims to try and infer that worldview from their strategies and policies, or to simply go along with their shallow pronouncements. Alexander's arguments seem to offer an unusually studied explanation for recent changes in academia from a neoliberal point of view. The prevailing direction of the neoliberal university has been particularly troubling for literary researchers, undermining their – my – core convictions as academics, and trapping them into impossible (and increasingly trivial) demands and insecurities. In the entrepreneurial university, literary research is regarded as particularly unproductive, particularly unprofitable. And yet such

research continues to be pursued, in a manner of speaking. Perhaps thinking as Alexander does will throw some light on this.

Having said that, let me reiterate that Alexander's arguments trouble me already, and that irrespective of their half-baked appearance so far (I daresay they will be baked better as he continues) and the scepticism I bring to them. There are two reasons for that too.

First, as noted already in my response to Alexander's opening gambit ("All literary research is..."): I am concerned about his denial of a political position, his subtle dismissal of political commitments, while nevertheless according politics a clearly dominant analytical function. Someone who sees political processes ubiquitously at work in all except his own assertions, and who seems to speak an apolitical truth, has a political agenda which surreptitiously seeks power (or seeks surreptitious profits) – especially someone as deliberative as Alexander. That does sound like a neoliberal tactic, an entrepreneurial strategy. He says he has political interests rather than a position, and admits to interests which are unspoken (he says he is not aware of some of them). I find the use of 'interest' there of interest. There is double-speak there: he might be *interested* as in having an enquiring attitude, or he might be *interested* as in having an agenda that serves his own ends.

More worrying – and here is the second reason – is Alexander's penchant for making totalizing statements. These appear constantly. There is a quiet totalitarian tendency at work in Alexander's language. It is always *all* or *nothing*: *all* literature is thus and has *always* been so, he says; not only is literature *already thus* it *should* be so, he says; literature is *completely* produced by the literary establishment, it has *no intrinsic value whatever*. Alexander speaks in uncompromising absolutes. There is no middle ground, no 'bit of this' as well as 'bit of that' and maybe 'something else too.' And he has no problems with being prescriptive. The strings of absolute statements leave a diminishing line between prescription and diktat.

There are, however, a couple of common starting points for social reasoning which Alexander and I seem to share. I am at one with his suggestion that reasoned arguments (and political commitments) should not be premised on articles of faith. The rebuttal of an article of faith is simply a contrary article of faith, there is no negotiating between their contrary assertions *as* articles of faith. Reasonable and persuasive arguments need more than this or that faith. And I also agree with Alexander's assumption (though very much less totalistically) that economic arrangements and corresponding structures of power underpin what is socially and culturally visible and collectively acknowledged.

If Alexander says profit making is all, then he is not saying anything. Profit making has behind it *a process of realisation* and before it *the mechanics of distribution*. When he gets to articulating those clearly, with concrete

examples before him, his glib reasoning will, I am convinced, run into insuperable contradictions. This unravelling I am looking forward to.

### *Alexander Search*

One of Suman's observations calls for an immediate response: the suggestion that I have a totalitarian mode of thinking. That is a serious worry. Suman makes this charge with damning glibness, and I worry about that glibness (maybe that is totalitarian?). I feel it is worth thinking through the difference between a 'generalisation' and a 'totalistic statement.' Those of my statements that Suman points to as 'totalistic' are more appropriately 'generalisations.' A generalisation is inferred from various observations, and taken as plausible till falsified convincingly – that is, it has the character of a working hypothesis till properly undermined or further confirmed. I do not think I have stated anything without leaving it open to further consideration, whether in the direction of being falsified or confirmed. By Suman's account, any attempt at generalisation is totalitarian, which, if taken seriously, would make philosophy or sociology or most kinds of rigorous thinking impossible.

## 6. Research for the Public Good

### *Alexander Search*

The upshot of my argument in I.3 (“The Tricky Anteriority of Literature”) is: our understanding of ‘literature’ as researchers is not determined by an object of study that precedes studious attention. It is constantly produced, shaped and modified according to the imperatives of a prevailing political and economic order, operating through state and corporate institutions within which literary researchers work and study takes place. However, literary researchers prefer to conduct their work as if ‘literature’ is an object that precedes them.

The question that arises is: why do literary researchers and their institutions maintain this consensual subterfuge (or false conviction)?

Here I will lead up to that question from a tangent. Getting to it involves covering some general ground, germane to the idea of being an entrepreneurial researcher. I start with one big assumption: as a collective professional undertaking, academic research serves a greater good (or interest) than that of any specific researcher or group – let us call this the ‘public good’ (or public interest). Let me immediately say here that my understanding of the public good is as delineated below and differs from those offered by other literary researchers (such as, Rylance 2016, which is discussed here in IV.2, “The Invisible Literary Researcher”).

There are two aspects to the public good of academic research. The obvious one is that it gives rise to (or should give rise to) various *benefits*, which are in principle available to or distributable to everyone. Benefits may include such intangible ones as happiness, virtue, confidence, security, understanding, etc., and tangible ones such as welfare provision, shared infrastructure, free access to education and knowledge, codes of social justice, etc. Of course, the tangible and the intangible benefits are difficult to extricate from each other – the point is, benefits are available to or distributable to all in principle.

The other aspect of the public good of academic research is that it participates in or encourages the generation of *profits* at various levels of and for various parties to commercial enterprise. In other words, academic research contributes to keeping capital in circulation, in the direction of growing wealth for society in general, through a cycle of generating profits



and spurring investment. That is the main way in which capitalist societies become affluent. The accumulation of wealth for society in general through the generation of profits by enterprise does not mean that profits are available to and distributable to everyone (as profits). In fact, profits need to be unevenly available at every juncture, concentrated in some hands and nodes, moving from some niches to others, to keep capital circulation flowing well and therefore capital growing. This is like a law of physics. In this respect, profits are unlike benefits; and it may seem that though their generation does increase the wealth of society in a general way, their uneven distribution means that profits should not be regarded as an aspect of the public good.

Nevertheless, profits *are* an aspect of the public good because benefits depend upon them. That is, benefits depend upon the general wealth of society. If society is affluent in a general way, then redistribution of some of that wealth to maximise benefits becomes possible (or could be arranged). Otherwise benefits would be reduced. This redistribution to enable more benefits may happen to some degree spontaneously, through market processes; or, it could be effected through political will – through taxation proportional to income, public-private partnerships, encouraging social ethics and altruism for private enterprise, etc. So, unless those profits are generated for the general affluence of society, albeit unevenly distributed, it is unlikely for benefits to be secured for all. For the pleasure, virtue, knowledge, etc. that literary research brings, through the access to education, archives, publishing, etc. that literary research works with, money is needed. Such money can be generated through enterprise that literary research could and should contribute to. The question is whether literary research does so already, and how could literary research do more of it in a tractable manner?

At any rate, both benefits and profits are mutually dependent aspects of the public good, and insofar as academic research contributes to the public good it contributes to both (or should). To maximise benefits, academic research must also strive to maximise profits in an ongoing manner.

There is another question worth posing there. Insofar as academic research leads to benefits, those are in principle for all; but insofar as research therefore and correlatively also works for profits, those are not for all (they are in the first instance unevenly accrued) but for some enterprising sector. What sector should the profit making of academic research serve? The obvious answer is: the enterprising sectors that support and invest in academic research, the governmental and corporate institutions that it takes place within and works through. With literary research in view, those are the university, the publishing firm, the media

corporation, the heritage industry, any relevant and promising start-up, any relevant and established information and entertainment business or public body, etc.

I am aware that some of my scholarly readers, the professional professors, such as Fabio and Suman, would have radical disagreements with much of the above reasoning already. They would say that they do not accept the relationship between benefits and profits. And they would particularly argue against the statement that the general wealth of society depends upon an uneven generation of profits. They will have sophisticated arguments to show that instead of an increase in general wealth, the system of profit generation in capital circulation produces deprivation and diminishment of benefits – and that, moreover, they have worked out better ways of increasing the general wealth of society and maximising benefits. They may well have very good arguments and evidence for the first half of the preceding sentence; I hope they will also have arguments for the latter part of that sentence (I am keen to see *those*).

In anticipation of such scholarly objectors, let me say the obvious though: the above rationale of benefits and profits as aspects of the public good, and their relation to academic research outlined above, is the rationale of the current global economic and political dispensation. It is embedded in the institutions and corporations of most (dare I say, all?) political states and their institutions. The latter include the academic institutions where research takes place and the organisations which support and promote research. I am not sure whether it has been otherwise in the past (probably not); it is definitely so now. This rationale underpins the very existence of the professors as professors even when they do not accept the rationale of capital circulation. If these radical professors – professional researchers – are polishing their *curricula vitarum* and meeting their performance targets and honing their profiles and raising external income and so on by carrying the brands of their employers and funders, they are already *functionally within* that rationale. If they nevertheless profess radical disagreement with that rationale, they are in a condition of existential ‘bad faith,’ as Sartre (1958 [1943], p.49, see also I.12 below) might have put it. They will say they have no choice, they need bread and butter – I can only say, quite so.

There are, of course, functionaries other than professors and researchers appointed in the institutions which nurture academic research for the public good by generating profits and enabling benefits. There are bureaucrats and executives who are trained up and employed to ensure that the above rationale of academic research is not lost sight of and adhered to. I understand that the term for them, at present, is *academic leaders*. States and corporations, as the main actors of the current economic order, very understandably try to ensure that the public good is never lost sight of via

these functionaries. Academic leaders are appointed as visionary people who ensure that the public good is served through academic research, if necessary irrespective of what professors profess. For academic researchers (including the literary) to not merely recognise but proactively embrace both the benefit-dispersal and the profit-generation aspects of their work is for them to take *possession* of their work and be less gratingly imprisoned in bad faith.

With those observations in view, I return to the question with which I started this chapter: why do literary researchers and their institutions consensually maintain the notion that literature is a precedent object of study when that is not the case? That can be understood in terms of the rationale outlined above.

## 7. Joycean Lessons: Applied and Basic Research

### *Alexander Search*

Putting literature as *anterior* to the literary establishment (in the sense outlined in I.3, “The Tricky Anteriority of Literature”) suggests that the object ‘literature’ has a self-generated validity. Its benefits are pre-established and acknowledged as a public good. Then the task of literary research and its institutions, as part of the literary establishment, is simply to enhance and perpetuate those already available benefits, as a disinterested public service, irrespective of profits. Putting literature as *posterior* to the literary establishment, as produced by the literary establishment and its institutions, does not annul the possibility of benefits but complicates the benefits by foregrounding the interests of that establishment. Insofar as the literary establishment embeds economic arrangements, that means foregrounding profits for some parts of that establishment alongside the generally available benefits. It is easier to appear to subscribe to the former rather than to acknowledge the latter.

Here is a simplistic illustration of the two approaches. The first approach involves, for instance, maintaining that James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) came to be recognised collectively as a literary work because its unusual textual and stylistic qualities hit a chord with readers of the time (they benefitted from reading it), which was then picked up by literary researchers. Literary researchers thereafter altruistically clarified those benefits further, and enhanced them by relating *Ulysses* to other similarly resonant texts which they collectively dubbed ‘modern.’

The second approach entails maintaining that there were powerful entrepreneurial drives within the literary establishment (against its dominant interests) around the time of *Ulysses*’s many-phased appearances. These incorporated adventurous elements within the literary establishment who were determined to come out dominant. These entrepreneurial drives had financial backing from elite patrons or discerning investors (some providing for Joyce and family), indefatigable publicists and agents and editors (like Ezra Pound, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, T.S. Eliot), critics and culture columnists with inroads into established publishing and media firms and academia, and the ability to set up economically viable means of

literary production (magazines like *Egoist*, *Little Review*, *Contact*, *Criterion*, *Transatlantic Review*, *transition*, etc., and publishing houses like Hogarth Press, Faber & Faber, Knopf, Random House, etc.). They were all already building a powerful joint-venture brand of being ‘modern’ and courting very marketable controversies (thumbs up for court cases brought by the moral brigade). Entrepreneurial academics building their careers and lining the purses of their institutional employers were involved in this process and urged it on. [However, literary critics then did not necessarily come with university affiliations; the profession of research was embedded in somewhat different economic arrangements from those current now.] These entrepreneurial forces converged on *Ulysses*, aligned it with their economic and ideological interests, and ensured that it came to be visible, available, disseminated, discussed and recognised as a literary text – alongside and in relation to other texts (for a more detailed discussion of some of the contexts of *Ulysses*, see II.31, “Profitable Literary Interpretation”).

However, none of the agents of those entrepreneurial forces which produced *Ulysses* as literature actually admitted to their entrepreneurialism – quite the contrary. And the critical industry that has thrived on *Ulysses* and Joyce since has been careful to conceal its business interests while being otherwise voluble about *Ulysses*. Actually, all the concerned entrepreneurs were cautiously tight-lipped about their economic calculations for all the literature they had successfully produced and branded ‘modern.’ On the contrary, they were very firm that it was merely dedication to the benefits of literature itself – its service to culture, society, the world – that drove them. They only admitted to the first approach above, and gave it all the backing of their significant social authority and financial power. Hand in hand with them, literary researchers not only echoed them but also tried to make sure that it would never be regarded otherwise.

It seems likely that these entrepreneurial calculations must have factored in the business advantage of the first approach. The business interests in question must have been enhanced by pretending that those interests do not exist. Literary researchers found that doing so in an ongoing way served themselves and their institutions well in terms of both (and relatedly) real and cultural capital.

I can almost visualise censorious Joyceans turning on me at this point. They will say, and rightly, that the material-production career of few literary texts has been subjected to as searching scrutiny as *Ulysses*’s. From various obscenity trials and bannings to Samuel Roth’s unauthorised edition of 1927 to the passionate debates about editing principles following the Hans Gabler *et al* synoptic edition of 1984 to news of the record auction prices of first editions into the 2000s – the commercial considera-

tions and economic regimes underpinning the production of literature have been starkly exposed and critically considered apropos of *Ulysses*. Several theses and monographs on the academic industry that thrives around *Ulysses* are available, carefully unpacking its reception history and institutionalisation in different countries; these variously expose the workings of economic and political power within the academy, and in the literary publishing and media industry. This is all true. However, I do not think too many Joyceans will deny that all these things have seemed noteworthy because *Ulysses* is in itself a great text, that Joyce was its authoring genius and producer, and that the self-evident quality of *Ulysses* would be recognised irrespective of all the above – all that is after the fact. It is some such pre-agreement that glues the communal cohesion of certain professors as ‘Joyceans.’ This pre-agreement was produced by the literary establishment as it produced *Ulysses* and ‘modern literature’ according to its entrepreneurial drives. If that is so even for an interpretive community (to use Stanley Fish’s phrase) like Joyceans, which is as self-aware of its own economic underpinnings and interests, then that is so for (dare I say) all literary interpretive communities. One could say the same for Shakespeareans and Romanticists and Harry Potterians and electronic literature aficionados ...

In brief, the literary establishment and especially the professors have carefully maintained the impression that benefits are comprehensively delinked from profits in producing literature, and have then talked mainly about the benefits and largely elided the profits (or put them as a collateral effect), because that served their entrepreneurial activity – that helped generate profits. How and why?

To this question I can only offer in the first instance a brief speculative answer, much in need of testing. It involves going back to thinking about academic research generally and its commitment to generating benefits and profits for the public good (see I.6, “Research for the Public Good”). More specifically, it involves suggesting a distinction between two kinds of academic research: applied research and basic research. Tentative definitions follow.

*Applied research* is where the benefits are so obviously experienced by consumers, and so clearly inferable from the entrepreneurial impetus of their profit-making sources, that large numbers of consumers are prepared to invest in the profit-making sources in the hope of further enhancing benefits. Here then, both the profit-making mechanism and the benefit-generating result are correlatedly marketable to significant numbers of consumers and investors.

*Basic research* is where the benefits are widely but indirectly experienced by consumers, and not clearly inferable from the functioning of their profit-making sources. Therefore, most consumers are unlikely to invest in

the profit-making sources even while being happy to partake of the benefits, usually in a habitualised and subliminal way. So, here, research entrepreneurs play up the benefits at the expense of profits to create an amenable environment for ever-greater consumption which some discerning investors can then capitalise on.

Literary research is basic research. That is why it is necessary for the entrepreneurial interests of such research, and for the institutions and investors which nurture it, to delink benefits from profits and to focus on the benefits. Literary research is but one of many areas of basic research, so such delinking occurs in various kinds of basic research – we just happen to be addressing literary research here. Quite possibly, the way of delinking benefits from profits that literary research does is different and distinct from the ways in which that is achieved for other kinds of basic research; equally, there might be significant similarities.

But these speculations leave me in a conundrum: is my attempt to foreground the entrepreneurial responsibilities of all literary research actually working against the entrepreneurial interests of literary research – the profit making of which is better served by being left as it is? No, of course not. Something has happened that makes it expedient now for literary research to not just embrace but also announce its comprehensively entrepreneurial character. The current context for literary research needs careful consideration.

## 8. Missteps

### *Dismal Scientist*

I fear Alexander has made a bit of a misstep in relation to basic and applied research. He speculates that most literary research corresponds to basic as opposed to applied research. I think the opposite is the case. Most literary research is applied. Some literary research can be characterised as basic research as Alexander contends. Looking at Alexander's example of the Joycean literary machine, the initial work of excavating Joyce's novel as a paradigmatic example of an emerging body of 'modern' literature can be seen as a kind of basic research. Prior to this literary activity, the text of *Ulysses* existed as the literary equivalent of undifferentiated matter. It takes a job of literary work to transform this text into raw material which can be subsequently worked up into something useful. A social process is necessary to transform matter in nature into a natural resource which can be subsumed to further transformation in the service of human purposes. 'An object' becomes 'the object' of an essentially social process. It is this form of initial literary research which can be seen as equivalent to basic research.

Subsequent literary activity is then needed to create something useful from this raw material. Alexander, in his first posting (I.1, "All literary research is..."), identifies a range of possible uses, including insights into culture, self, society and the nature of good citizenship. The secondary appropriation of the hedonic benefits of literature also falls into this list. This is applied research in being directed at creating specific use values, and the vast bulk of the output of the Joycean industry falls into this category. These are all aspects of literary production which can be directly consumed by individual consumers, government agencies, NGOs, corporate entities, literary researchers themselves, etc. As consumed goods, using resources that could have been directed to other uses, these productions are concretely preferred to alternative consumption possibilities and thus acquire a concrete value relative to these other possibilities. As these products have a demonstrable relative economic value, this opens the possibility that they can be exchanged and contracted for.



*Alexander Search*

Dismal Scientist is right; I have overstated the 'basic research' character of literary research. It is a matter of degree (I suppose it must be so for all research); literary research could be regarded as substantially more 'applied' than 'basic,' and the point is where the emphasis is laid.

In terms of emphasis, though, the drift of my argument does not change particularly by this misstep. Let me put it this way: literary research has to be considered and thought of as 'basic' *before* – and *so that* – its 'applied' possibilities are released: so it is expedient to focalise its benefit-giving and underplay its profit-making impetus. Some kinds of research (like construction engineering) can be presented as 'applied' straightaway (in fact, even in a way that elides its dependence on 'basic' research), since that enhances its further profit-making prospects. That means that its benefit-giving and profit-making character can be promoted *coterminously*.

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Alexander has a specific way of arguing which is difficult to engage with. He takes a partial truth that could lead to a critical stance, and then generalises it. In order to refute what he says, one is forced to deny that truth and thereby fall into a conformist position. The existence of a *Ulysses* industry is a fact; as such, it should be analysed as an interesting symptom of the industrialisation of the university, which has become ever more similar to a business corporation. The main reason for so many scholarly publications on *Ulysses*, as on so many other literary works, is that in the Anglophone world one has to publish a book to get a job, and one has to have publications to get tenure, funding, etc. What Alexander does is take this symptom and generalise it, as if it corresponded to the whole. The Joyce industry is not all there is about Joyce. Whatever there may be of opportunism in academia, it is not the whole of academia. In sum, the way the arguments are framed invites one to the weak, apologetic rejoinder: 'things are not exactly the way you say they are.' The critical challenge, I think, in dealing with Alexander's claims is to recognise their partial truth, change their valence (he believes they are good, whereas I think they are pernicious) and turn them into objects of interpretation.

## 9. A Way of Arguing

*Suman Gupta*

Fabio usefully draws attention to Alexander's *way of arguing*. The force of Alexander's arguments derives from a method, and to a great extent the substance of what he argues follows from his method. He seizes the initiative in offering definitions, so that the response then has to either go along with them or appear in their terms in some way. He puts the normative adjective in categorically, so that then one is left with either accepting it or defending against it. Alexander's method is to take a deaf initiative and then await the response rather than hearing what is relevant and then reaching for a way forward. Alexander is likely to take a unilateral decision and then say, 'Having consulted widely and heard you all it is evident to me that my decision is the best one, with some minor adjustments in view of what you have said.' Alexander's *way of arguing* is to set the agenda and then make everything conditional to it. He is 'leadership' material.

One may say that much academic argument in practice does the same thing. Much scholarly reasoning consists in generalisations from what Fabio call 'partial truths.' Generalisations from 'partial truths' hold, as Alexander knows well, unless you can prove that 'partial truths' are also and at the self-same moment 'partial lies,' which is often not the case (not easily done). A 'partial truth' is not necessarily also a 'partial lie'; it may possibly be a partial apprehension of the 'whole truth.'

This is worth considering carefully. Alexander's way of arguing is eerily familiar to me where I am employed, in government and bureaucratic practice. Every consultation document and process, institutional decision-making method, every policy implementation works through something like this way of arguing. If we want to argue against it, we need to seize the agenda and set it – but also, to make our agenda stronger than Alexander's, to show at the same time and clearly and indisputably why his agenda is composed of 'partial lies.'

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Alexander's way of arguing is similar to that of university administrations in my experience too. I see two ways of dealing with it. The first one, as Suman says, is to propose a stronger agenda than Alexander's; the second

would be to proceed as we are doing here, that is, considering his arguments and showing their shortcomings.

This leads me to reconsider, against the grain of Alexander's way of arguing, the division of research into basic and applied. At first, it did not make much sense to me, for I can think of only one way of dealing with literature or any kind of cultural artefact. If you are writing about a novel, you read it unhurriedly, more than once, and reflect upon it. Normally an idea emerges. You then examine it, think about it and, if the idea seems solid, you go ahead and read what has already been written on the novel. From the encounter of your idea with the field of research generally a new, reconfigured idea appears. It may very well happen that you realise that your idea now does not make much sense, in which case you look for another one or abandon the project altogether. It is always useful to remember that failure is a plausible option and one is not obliged to produce something if employed as a researcher. I am unable to discern where the basic research begins and ends in this process, and at what point the applied research appears.

It seems to me that the division of basic and applied research owes a lot to the rise and institutionalisation of Literary Theory in the 1970s/1980s (see II.28, "Purpose in Literary Research," and II.36, "Literary and Commercial Value," on this), for it was Theory that emphatically foregrounded the process of concept formation in literary studies. Once concepts start to become disengaged from the material they should conceptualise, a split is established which severs basic (concept formation) from applied research (the application of these concepts to particular literary and cultural objects). A productivist chain of metaphors becomes possible: cultural manifestations are like raw materials, criticism produces consumption goods, literary theory produces durable ones, and Theory generates capital goods. Notably, literary works become inert within this framework, for they are rendered passive – just receiving concepts, not generating them. Significant too is how the international division of labour also works here. Scholars in Brazil, for instance, seem almost never to produce concepts, but to constantly acquire them ready-made, adapting them to native contents. Is Theory perhaps a privileged vehicle for literary entrepreneurship?

In considering this question, I am reminded of the following from Vincent B. Leitch's *Living with Theory* (2008):

Anyone who has looked into 'futures' on today's financial markets realizes not only that they are highly risky instruments, but that they focus on short-term performance, on year or less. You put up a little money (a small margin) and open a future position, choosing either to speculate on an increasing market or to hedge on a declining market for, say, oil, coffee, sugar, or some

other asset. On any day during the term of the brief contract, you can estimate that fair value of your futures asset. [...] If you choose, you can close out your position at any time. In our current neoliberal capitalist milieu, an era of fast turnovers and casino sensibilities, 'futures' signify quick gains made off growth or decline. No matter which. [...] Not surprisingly, there is an academic futures market in theory, including the history of theory.

The theory futures market is more volatile than the markets, for instance, in Renaissance of Enlightenment research and scholarship. Academics, whether theorists or not, but especially up-and-coming young scholars, will calculate on any given day how the market looks for new historicism, feminist theory, poststructuralism, cultural studies, Marxism, new formalism, postcolonial theory, etc. Intellectuals today operate in a world of markets. You can close out or open a position on any theory at any moment. Personally, I am regularly asked by students, faculty and others about theory and culture studies: whether to buy, sell, or hold and in just those terms. People want to know very badly what is the latest thing. Without being coy, I remain wary of my role as futures advisor for potential theory investors, including bemused professional onlookers. In the latter category I have in mind higher education journalists, humanities deans, book publishers, and journal editors. I work for them, too. My closing point: there is a future in theory futures. (Leitch 2008: 30-1)

It took me a while to realise that the semantic field of stock market business is not used here critically, not even ironically, but neutrally.

### *Alexander Search*

Fabio talks of Theory as rising in the 1970s/1980s, of the institutionalisation of something called 'literary theory' as an independent dimension of scholarly production and teaching curricula. This seems to be a common way of talking about Theory in literary circles. However, I do not think there was ever a pre-theoretical literary land of research, where the researcher could conduct such a leisurely and introspective exercise as Fabio suggests above. It is evidently the *institutionalisation* of Theory in universities, by publishers, in the media, etc. that interests Fabio, not really the *content* of literary theory, the concepts mentioned. The distinction of basic and applied research obviously has something to do with institutionalisation, which always comes before concepts and is inevitably structured by economic considerations.

## 10. Changes and Futures

### *Alexander Search*

Over the last five decades (at a rough estimate), changes have occurred in universities and research institutes which render it necessary for all academic researchers to not merely embrace but actively promote their entrepreneurial character. That includes literary researchers (especially *such* researchers), whose activities are widely perceived as being non- or even anti-entrepreneurial though they are actually comprehensively entrepreneurial.

I came across a useful and encouragingly brief account of these changes by Suman (see Appendix at the end of this book; also Allen and Gupta 2016, Ch.5). He presents these changes as discernible in the working conditions of academics – in both research and teaching – and identifies several phases. Though Suman's tone in presenting these is apocalyptic, the substance of his account seems sound. Their thrust involves, in brief: (1) developing robust methods for measuring benefits arising from research and teaching, and accordingly setting performance targets for researchers and teachers (academic workers); and (2) dividing the workforce in the university between broadly two areas of complementary expertise, i.e. those (academic workers) who predominantly focus on doing the academic work for maximising benefits, and those (academic leaders) who particularly ensure that the profit-making aspects of academic work are fully exploited so that the university remains sustainable (preferably grows) and therefore publicly beneficial. Despite Suman's tone then, the changes seem to be designed to maximise the public good of research and teaching in the university. These changes have occurred or are occurring widely, indeed globally, and chart a path necessitated by the growing scale and complexity of the university, due to the democratisation of the university. Suman shows, despite himself, that these changes have been developed in logical and evidenced ways, with the support of academic workers, and with the public interest firmly in view – indeed, with public consultations and involvement. Needless to say, the division of expertise in (2) is too schematically stated; there are some overlaps, but increasingly fewer overlaps in practice than was conventional in, say, the 1960s university.

I was unable to understand why Suman makes his clear exposition of necessary changes the vehicle for pessimistic conclusions. In particular, he takes recourse (scholars can seldom speak without appeals to authority) to Michel Foucault's (2004) 1979 Collège de France lectures, to pronounce doom and gloom on behalf of *all* academics:

The lectures referred to a much broader field, which Foucault dubbed 'biopolitics', wherein such cost-benefit accounting practices have become a naturalised and pervasive grounding for liberal 'governmentality' [...]. Under the sway of liberal governmentality, Foucault observed, individuals become 'entrepreneurs of the self,' constantly realizing themselves and advancing their interests and confirming their existence through cost-benefit accounting. [...For academics this] is riven with anxiety because the *academic self* that academic workers seek to realize, promote, sustain and confirm is slipping away – is ceasing to be recognized, seems to be falling unnoticed into a black hole. (see Appendix: 259)

So, I had a look at what Foucault said in those lectures and found that Suman was being simplistic. Foucault was concerned with a new *conception* of *homo aconomicus* and subjectivity rather than suggesting anything relevant to *actual* persons and their working experience (the conditions of work). And that is all I have to say of Foucault's (2004: 226) 'entrepreneur of himself.' By way of an aside: this reference to Foucault does pique my interest though; it reminds me of the agonised debate on whether these lectures prove that Foucault was sympathetic to neoliberalism rather than perhaps tendentiously Marxist (Vogelmann's 2016 review essay gives a good account of several publications on this; the point is also discussed in Mirowski 2013). The scholarly tendency to take the implied author of academic texts as an integral person says something about how the great-authority brand works and is constantly co-opted to entrepreneurial ends. That involves two obvious and preconceived missteps: (a) seeking rigid ideological consistency from author-personae across their oeuvres (inconsistency and contradiction have to be denounced as morally suspect); and (b) suggesting that an author-persona's articulation of a system of ideas is tantamount to expressing ethical commitment to those ideas – that describing is the same as announcing conviction, and even that citing is equivalent to accepting. Apparently, Mikhail Bakhtin's demonstrations of polyphony and the dialogic imagination in texts were in vain, or rather, those are okay for 'literary' texts but inapplicable to 'scholarly' texts.

Suman's surprising descent into despair after a clear exposition of necessary and understandable changes in the university seems to me a common sort of attitude problem among academics, many of whom prefer whining pessimism to positive thinking. With a positive attitude, the necessary changes that have taken place in the university do present

occasional problems but call for no gloom. The problems simply need to be resolved in the direction of optimising the public good of research.

One of these problems, which Suman's account addresses, concerns the increasingly impervious (though desirable, in my view) division of university functions between academic leaders and academic workers. Since these two functions are actually mutually dependent – the profits and benefits of research are tied in with each other – it is critically important that academic leaders and academic workers (researchers) should talk to each other. It is necessary for academic leaders to understand the entrepreneurial potential of all academic research, and for academic workers to clarify the entrepreneurial underpinnings of all academic research – especially where that potential is not immediately evident. This is especially the case for literary research, where the profit-making impetuses are often concealed so as to activate them, and where consequently benefit generation is exclusively foregrounded. Without a proper understanding between academic workers and leaders, the latter may short-sightedly support only the applied dimensions of research, where the relation between profit making and benefit distribution are obvious; similarly, thereby academic workers who feel neglected may resentfully deny the less obvious (even deliberately concealed) but enormously productive entrepreneurial impetus of their research and mistakenly oppose benefits to profit-making.

In the less complex and small-scale university, academic leadership and academic work could be considered coincident functions and leaders-cum-workers could simply *know* how the relationship between benefits and profits work in academic research. In the more complex and democratised university of today, where academic leaders and academic workers are usefully divided in terms of complementary expertise, the leaders needs to be constantly *persuaded* of that relationship by workers. That is, as noted already, especially critical for areas like literary research. Under current circumstances it is necessary for literary researchers to reveal the comprehensively entrepreneurial underpinnings of their work to academic leaders.

In fact, the long-term vision of the university's role in optimising the public good by generating profits and benefits needs now to be considered first and foremost and most systematically from the academic leadership perspective (more on this in IV.55 and IV.56). Let us not simply speak as academic researcher-workers; let us all think as academic leaders are required to. Their job is to make activities like literary research pay without necessarily being researchers of any sort, and they therefore have to be made to understand the entrepreneurial underpinnings of such research. If academic leaders can grasp (despite the odds) the entrepreneurial underpinnings of literary research, then they should be able to grasp the

entrepreneurial potential of *all* research – to whatever degree applied and basic, to whatever extent the emphasis is put on one or another. Literary research presents a bottom line of non-obvious but proven entrepreneurialism.

The optimal scenario that should be contemplated now is of the Totally Entrepreneurial University (more on the ‘entrepreneurial university’ in I.15 below), where, insofar as research is concerned, profits and benefits are co-relatedly realised to the maximum extent through the concerted effort of every human and non-human resource at its command. By way of briefly stating choices that come to mind immediately from a leadership perspective, there are two obvious pathways towards the Totally Entrepreneurial University:

- Either, a pathway whereby academic leaders and academic workers will work with complete mutual understanding, harmoniously fulfilling their respective functions in mutually respectful accord, and at their well-defined levels, for the emergence of the organic Totally Entrepreneurial University.
- Or, by a pathway of developing the leadership skills of academic workers and the academic comprehension of academic leaders towards convergence (training programmes will be involved to these ends), so that gradually the *universalisation of academic leadership in the university* could take place and thus the Totally Entrepreneurial University obtained.

These are very perfunctory observations from a leadership perspective. They are mentioned here simply so as to gesture towards the horizons within which debates such as this can be undertaken. My business here is really literary research rather than the university at large; my concern is with what the researcher does rather than what the leader does.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

If the final aim of the university is to generate profits, then the research model Alexander seems to be outlining is not optimal. Then there is actually no need to make space for research at all. Research may at most be useful for elite universities, which are in a minority and governed by their own peculiarities, more the exceptions than the rule. It is useless to try to neo-liberalise them because they have so much money that they can squander it in the most non-utilitarian ways – by supporting, for instance, programs in Greek and Latin for a handful of students. When we think



about the mass university, as we should in the twenty-first century, we realise that research is largely unnecessary.

Take, for instance, the sudden burgeoning of private universities in Brazil, which has till recently been dominated by a relatively small number of public universities. This is, I am sure, far from being an unknown phenomenon in many countries. In most of these new for-profit universities, the great majority of professors are paid by the hour, and contents to be transmitted are provided by the university itself in the form of hand-outs and booklets, not actual books. This kind of streamlined, conveyor-belt teaching gives students a sense of security, because they can feel that something is being taught, something they can grasp and take home. This approach to knowledge strongly contrasts with one which accommodates actual research and its uncertainties: the precariousness of hypotheses (which may be proven wrong), the dialectic of subject and object in literature, the role of the presentation in the constitution of the object, etc.... In the mass university, the only need for research is to update didactic materials, which generate profits.

I am obviously being overly cynical, but that is only because Alexander is being wildly materialistic.

But the elephant in the room is disappearing, which is itself an interesting phenomenon. The simple idea that would reduce all Alexander's arguments to naught is that the State should fund the university system and let academics do as they please. The Pavlovian-reflex rebuttal that 'this is a dream world, resources are limited' contains the misery it projects. Society is immensely rich; in fact, one of its major problems is what to do with so much wealth. It is just that it is ill-distributed: the top 1% of the world has as much as the other 99%. We should think more about how this absolutely transparent truth seems to disappear from the horizon of thought.

## 11. Disinterestedness and Academic Freedom

*Suman Gupta*

The weak point in Alexander's definitions of basic research and applied research, picked up in Dismal Scientist's comment, is revealing (see I.7, "Joycean Lessons," above). The weakness extends into fissures across Alexander's arguments.

In his bid to make out that all (literary) research is entrepreneurial, Alexander defines both basic research and applied research as being directed towards benefits and profits, but in distinct ways. He says basic research conceals its profit-making potential by foregrounding its benefit-generating thrust, while applied research makes explicit the relationship between profit making and benefit generation. Thus, Alexander seems to hold basic research and applied research apart as different kinds of research – parallel modes – which are found, he then asserts, in greater or lesser measures in specific disciplines such as literary studies. Dismal Scientist rightly points out the obvious: that such a clear separation is misconceived, that Alexander appears to have forgotten what the relationship between basic research and applied research consists in. *Basic research makes applied research possible; basic research has to precede applied research.* In Dismal Scientist's words, basic literary research consists in the 'literary work to transform this text into raw material which can be subsequently worked up into something useful,' and applied literary research consists in the 'subsequent literary activity [that] is then needed to create something useful from this raw material.' Alexander tries to wriggle out of this objection by saying it is a matter of *emphasis in presenting* the thrust of disciplinary activity – literary research here. This makes the whole business of basic and applied research appear as a rhetorical matter; they seem to be the same thing (thus more than related), only distinguishable by how they are talked about. That is, however, simply wrong: they are not simply constituted differently in talk, they *are* different and related practices of research – and the basic precedes and makes possible the applied.

Thus, Alexander sets us up to be receptive to his misconceived way of defining basic and applied research by *first* offering definitions of profits and benefits as inextricably related, and dubbing them both as the 'public good' that research is for (I.6, "Research for the Public Good"). He tacitly

invites us to think about basic and applied research *accordingly* in terms of the already defined benefits and profits and public good. He surreptitiously urges us to convert our critical terminology so that the use value of research becomes a pre-condition of doing research.

Few would disagree with the sentiment that in a general way ‘research is for the public good.’ The manner in which Alexander defines benefits and profits is broadly acceptable. We can also go along with the observation that in the capitalist order benefits and profits are inevitably mutually dependent. But none of that means that both basic research and applied research should be equally and comprehensively understood as directed towards benefits and profits, i.e. as directed towards generating use value. Rather, the case is: applied research is definitively devoted towards realising both benefits and profits from research to varying degrees according to area; basic research is not undertaken to definitively realise either. The task of basic research is to produce a mass of, so to speak, fundamental information and principles of intellection (say, raw knowledge material), which may or may not have immediate use value – but without which it would be impossible for applied research to develop towards realising benefits and profits.

By way of a materialistic conceit to clarify this: basic research is involved in knowing about and understanding the properties of materials in the earth, and applied research then is about extracting and purifying those materials from the earth and using them to make swords and chains and locks and the like. The latter (applied research) offers obvious benefits and profits, but it is utterly dependent on finding out about materials and investigating their properties first (basic research). Basic research into materials in the earth does not need to have the objectives of applied research, the production of useful things, in mind. In fact, it is best if the basic researchers into materials are *not* asked to think about swords and chains and locks and so on, because that might actually impede and limit their work – and therefore limit the work of the applied researchers who do need to think about swords and chains and locks and so on. If the relationship between basic and applied research is wiped out by exhorting all researchers to think about how to make useful things, then the possibility that the basic researchers will produce raw knowledge which may unpredictably and unexpectedly become useful to applied researchers is substantially reduced. That may lead to getting stuck with making swords and chains and locks and so on and never quite getting to nuclear weapons and plastic straps and encryption systems. Academic research would stultify.

What goes for materials in the earth also goes for texts in the world.

To repeat: the benefits and profits that can be obtained through applied research are given more scope – can be maximised – only if the area of basic research is not limited by considerations of benefits and profits. It is best to think of basic research as devoted to a less user-specific purpose, such as understanding or clarifying the world, irrespective of the benefits and profits that may thereby become possible. Then basic researchers are able to produce knowledge that could be drawn upon by applied researchers, in ways that they might not have anticipated and whenever the time is ripe and the conditions permit, to generate profits and benefits for the public good. Which basic-research finding will become useful and applicable and when is impossible to predict; unless that knowledge exists already, the applied researcher cannot see where it might be useful and brought to generate profits and benefits.

Basic research is undertaken irrespective of foreseeable benefits and profits – to, so to speak, understand and clarify the natural and social and textual world – and is in that sense *disinterested*. Only if that sort of research is cultivated would it be possible for applied research to innovate and develop progressively effective ways of serving profit-making and benefit-giving interests for the private and public good. In that sense, applied research is *interested*. The *interests* in capital circuits are best served by keeping basic research *disinterested*.

Understood in this manner, basic research falls outside the scope of Alexander's entrepreneurial calculations. It is outside the gauging of both benefits and profits, yet it also bears upon and enables both. That is another way of saying that the disinterestedness of basic research is essential for the public good to be served through applied research. The public good of academic research in Alexander's terms is served effectively by the interestedness of applied research only because of foundations laid by the disinterestedness of basic research. Since the disinterestedness of basic research is outside Alexander's ken, he is unable to comprehend it, unable to grasp what it means. So, he is unable to understand the critical importance of academic freedom (among all the high-flown ethical terminology, 'freedom' has no purchase in Alexander's thinking). *Academic freedom is enjoined in arrangements for research work that allow basic researchers to pursue any line of enquiry pertinent to the natural or social or textual world for the sake of understanding and clarifying it, irrespective of considerations of benefits and profits, indifferently to the purposive calls of the public good.*

Because Alexander is unable to grasp this, his sort of thinking endangers all kinds of academic research. Alexander's argument seeks to make all research applied, and confine what is pursued at present as disinterested basic research to the gauging and purposiveness of applied research. This is clear when he disarmingly says: 'a path necessitated by the growing scale and complexity of the university, due to the democratisation of the

university [...] has entailed: developing robust methods for measuring benefits arising from research and teaching, and accordingly setting performance targets for researchers and teachers (academic workers)' (I.10, "Changes and Futures"). He makes this observation on the back of something I had written (see Appendix) only, I suspect, to provoke; he must know that he was deliberately misreading that argument – but I will not attempt to defend or clarify what I have published already. At any rate, it is clear that setting performance targets according to measurements of benefits on *basic* research is to kill off *basic* research and make all research *applied*. This single step, so cheerfully endorsed by Alexander, destroys disinterestedness and academic freedom which are the core underpinning conditions of basic research. In the same step Alexander also undermines what he is arguing for: the potential for applied research to generate benefits and profits, which depends on the freedom of basic research.

If even a little space is left for the disinterestedness and freedom that allow basic research to be basic, and to blossom, then a little space is left for the *raison d'être* of entrepreneurialism to be questioned.

On a distinct but related note: much of Alexander's argument is carried by upbeat terminology rather than consistent adherence to reasonable principles and understandable inferences. Aggressive value-laden terms forestall the attitude with which his proposals should be received: '*democratisation* of the university,' '*robust* methods,' '*proactive*,' '*innovative*,' and so on. Alexander's proposals are thus presented with coercive affirmativeness so that even a neutral reception of them seems pessimistic. Aggressive upbeatness could be an 'attitude problem,' in Alexander's terms; to me it seems like a hard-sell strategy because the idea being sold is shaky. Moreover, Alexander's argument is pushed with the aid of intralingual translations. The tenets of disinterested basic research and academic freedom that I have outlined are, by and large, obvious and consensually accepted by academic researchers. But Alexander tries to throw academic researchers off-balance, to make them stumble out of the consensus, by unexpected and persuasive translations of terms. Thus, the public good of research is quickly translated into a discourse of benefits and profits in a way that may catch the researcher off-balance; the principles of basic and applied research are then also translated into the discourse of benefits and profits so that the inattentive researcher might simply gloss over them to find herself trapped; and so forth. Alexander's enterprise of entrepreneurialising all research consists significantly in translating academic concepts into entrepreneurial terms which come weighted with a purposive logic and drift. To this extent Alexander's is a rhetorical enterprise.

*Alexander Search*

Suman's conceit above comes to a shuddering and abrupt halt with: 'What goes for materials in the earth also goes for texts in the world.' I assume he means *social* world. It would be conceited to think that all will fall for this conceit. He seems to be saying that basic research is mainly in the region of discovery (making sense of what is there) while applied research is broadly in the region of invention (making new things and making anew and remaking). Materials in the earth are there already to be discovered, but texts in the social world have to first be invented – be made and remade. In that sense texts are products of a socio-economic process *before* they can be found (discovered) and studied, while minerals or metals are found before they can become products and then used in products. The literary researcher concerned with texts cannot but factor in the process of production that is concretised in texts. By Suman's argument, then, literary research in particular cannot really be disinterested basic research at any stage. It is interested to begin with, or, in my terms, entrepreneurial.

I prefer my way of defining 'basic' and 'applied' research.

## 12. In Bad Faith

*Suman Gupta*

Despite Alexander's misleading manoeuvres, on a couple of occasions his arguments teeter on the brink of their own destruction. That is to say, his bid to render all literary research entrepreneurial courts the possibility of de-entrepreneurialising all literary research – and possibly the academy itself. Perhaps Alexander gestures that way inadvertently or unwittingly. The first occasion makes me think that it is possibly inadvertent; the second makes me suspect that his project is not what it seems (to justify the ways of business to literary researchers).

The first appears above in I.6, "Research for the Public Good." Here Alexander says that professors who express radical opposition to the capitalist order wherein the university is embedded, and champion disinterested oppositional research as their professional function, are in a condition of Sartrean bad faith. Since their continuing employment calls for constant adherence to and advancement of entrepreneurial processes in the university, there is a contradiction between their professional lives and their professionally espoused convictions – they know this and yet maintain this false position, so bad faith. They function supportively in a system of benefits via profits as the public good while pronouncing, probably sincerely and often justifiably, that this system diminishes benefits to enhance profits and undermines the public good. To overcome this contradiction, Alexander recommends that all such professors should overtly embrace the entrepreneurial rationale and work for the public good in its terms.

So I am reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's account of bad faith:

To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here. [...] It follows first that the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which knows that I must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived. Better yet I must know the truth very exactly *in order* to conceal it more carefully – and

this not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to re-establish a semblance of duality – but in the unitary structure of a single project. How then can the lie subsist if the duality which conditions it is suppressed? (Sartre 1958 [1943]: 49)

If we limit the existentialist predicates that universalise bad faith and its contradiction in Sartre's reflections, and focus on the social conditions that are relevant here, Alexander's call for active compromise and happy co-optation seems suspect. Even in Sartre's illustrations of bad faith – the prospective lover, the waiter in the café, the closet homosexual – bad faith is a mutually maintained position of self and others, *not a moral choice*. Bad faith can be comforting or discomfiting and is part of a structure of being in society (in the world, more broadly). It should not be treated as an ill-advised moral decision made by individuals which needs a remedy; it is, in this context, an aspect of social consciousness.

This suggests that the consciousness of bad faith can lead in exactly the opposite direction from the one Alexander recommends. If such consciousness is of an unpleasant truth rather than a pleasant untruth, if it grates constantly and the wound inflames and festers, and moreover, if it becomes persuasively expressible and collectively assumed, then the consequence could be exactly the opposite of Alexander's recommendation. *Then a moral choice might appear*: to deal collectively with the disease because many are suffering from it, or not to.

All this sounds a bit abstract and ethereal. Let us suppose that a large number of professors (always in the broad sense of academic workers of all sorts) are conscious that their grating and painful bad faith is both engendered within their universities, and backed by outward spirals of power structures and economic arrangements – into the rungs of states and corporations and their global collaboration. Moreover, suppose that these professors find an effective way of expressing this consciousness collectively, to each other and for other publics. Then they may refuse to countenance their compliant professional functioning because they are within the profession, and use their professional functions to work against the coercion brought upon them through their professions – from *within* and because they are *within*. Among other means, to that end they could take possession of the production, circulation and reception of texts that they have a foot in because of their profession. These suppositions are far from implausible because, as even Alexander acknowledges, it is apparent now that the balance of benefits and profits are not unambiguously a public good, that profits may be encouraged to severely limit if not kill off benefits, that the production and management of escalating inequality and disaffection may become the normalised function of the university – and of the politico-economic system that the university is a cog within.



That still sounds fuzzily abstract, but I will leave that possibility there for the moment. Perhaps it is a condition of the present that articulation of these possibilities other than in the abstract seems a challenge.

The other rather remarkable occasion on which Alexander reaches towards a potential undermining of his position is in I.10, “Changes and Futures,” above. One has to ask whether he is being serious when he, in the latter part there, assumes the view of academic leaders working towards the Totally Entrepreneurial University as the final scenario – an ideal of entrepreneurial academia that puts a management perspective on the present. Perhaps this was an ironic passage, but can the entrepreneurial ideologue be ironic? Thus, Sartre: ‘In irony a man annihilates what he posits within one and the same act; he leads us to believe in order not to be believed; he affirms to deny and denies to affirm; he creates a positive object but it has no being other than its nothingness’ (Sartre 1958 [1943]: 47). At any rate, here Alexander performs a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of the entrepreneurial academic rationale against itself. To convince us of the inevitability of this rationale he derives an absurd extreme from that rationale so as to effectively undermine it – and, moreover, undermine it in *two ways*. Here are the two pathways towards the Totally Entrepreneurial University that Alexander’s academic leader contemplates:

- Either, a pathway whereby academic leaders and academic workers will work with complete mutual understanding, harmoniously fulfilling their respective functions in mutually respectful accord, and at their well-defined levels, for the emergence of the organic Totally Entrepreneurial University.
- Or, by a pathway of developing the leadership skills of academic workers and the academic comprehension of academic leaders towards convergence (training programmes will be involved to these ends), so that gradually the *universalisation of academic leadership in the university* could take place and thus the Totally Entrepreneurial University obtained.

The first is evidently a vision of the university as a fascist syndicalist institution embedded within and at the service of the neoliberal capitalist order. Preposterous as such visions have repeatedly proved, this may well be the logical horizon that academic leaders are now working towards – that is, when they are not simply lining their and their bosses’ pockets and being entrepreneurial for the ‘public good’ of the moment. The second is weirdly a complete flip of the current rationale of entrepreneurial academia, a direct act of violence against it, though it seems to appear from within that rationale. The universalisation of academic leadership in the

university is a concept to conjure with. It both follows from the hierarchical practices of the entrepreneurial university, and utterly undermines it. Though Alexander presents it in his characteristically optimistic vein as a scenario for strategic management to play with, its implications leave strategic management as an empty signifier.

It may be a moment of (witting?) irony from Alexander, but it could be taken seriously within the present-day university, at least insofar as I know it. Outside expensive and exclusive academic leadership training courses, the fact that ‘academic leadership’ implies ‘academic followership’ is carefully concealed – by generally not speaking about followership. Rather, the distribution of leaderly titles to followers on a tight leash (Dean-of-that, Director-of-such-and-such, Head-of-this-department, etc.), with a pay-rise, promises of promotion and prestige, and a confidentiality-and-obedience contract, is a well-known ploy of strategic management. Many professors feel they are outside the strict containment of university hierarchies, since the benefits their researches reap are uncontrollable even if the profits are extracted by the university. It is difficult to tell where academic leadership begins and ends, just as it is not quite done to rub in the duties of obedient followership. Proposing a universalisation of academic leadership seems meaningful under these circumstances.

### 13. Literature Can Criticise Research

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

I would like to call attention to a point that seems particularly important to me. The horizon of this debate is the idea of research. The condition for the university to harbour literature is that it is a vehicle for the production of knowledge, hence the notion of research as a practice that is able to extract knowledge from literary texts. But to identify literature with knowledge production is reductive, for it ignores other aspects of literary experience – such as, the pleasure literary works yield, the potential they have for creating intersubjective bonds, their relationship to people's memories, etc. Of course, all those can be turned into objects of research, but literature consists in something more and offers more than just knowledge. Evidently, I am not arguing for a realm of authenticity beyond research. My point is rather that in the lexicon of literary studies, 'criticism' stands higher than 'research': literature can criticise research as such, showing what is lacking in it. Literature ends up having the upper hand, providing a sort of knowledge – or at least a cognisance, an apprehension – of that which research cannot provide, and of research in terms which it cannot incorporate. Literature can act as the bad conscience of research.

Literature is able to criticise research when it fails to give what is expected of it in terms of knowledge. My point is that the extraction of knowledge is just part of what is at stake in dealing with literature. When you memorise a poem, that cannot count as research, and yet a good recitation is already an interpretation. This could be thought of as literature's affinity to music. Or it could be considered literature's resistance to strict meaningfulness. Of course, Alexander will say that such resistance in literature, everything that is aconceptual about literature, including the sheer pleasure it gives, can be turned into research material — which, of course, is true. But then his sense of research begins to resemble a steam-roller that flattens down everything. It becomes that which has no holes, no internal tension or inherent insufficiency. As pure transparency, research is unquestionable. In this regard research becomes equivalent in capitalism to the entrepreneurial spirit, which subsumes whatever is at hand to a money-making logic, of necessity never questioning itself.

*Alexander Search*

I do not have a clue what you mean by 'literature could criticise research.' It seems to me that such a notion can only come from a literary researcher, and will therefore be another intervention, based on research, by a researcher (or critic). I do not think 'literature' does any criticising on its own behalf, as an articulable position, even if we turn 'literature' into an allegorical persona.

Your desire to rescue an unsullied literature from researchers in the service of enterprise is evident, but, as you recognise, there is not much beyond your desire to go with in this argument. It is simply patently untrue that the conception of research and entrepreneurialism I have outlined is without an account of pleasure: the commodity form and processes of consumption account largely for pleasure. Nor is it the case that entrepreneurial literary research cannot take account of any 'resistance to meaning': dialogic relationships with markets and the public good are involved, necessitating constant negotiation with resistances and conflicting demands. And I do not know what you mean by 'pure transparency': the institutions and politico-economic arrangements in question are 'transparent' only in the sense of being publicly accountable. They are far from invisible.

You have an interesting trick in using 'literature' as if it is a person making decisions and doing things (personified), which is meaningless. No doubt this is a nice rhetorical turn, but where rhetorical turns replace syntactical logic and comprehensible references there is nothing to argue with. Research does not resemble a 'steamroller.' That is a simile which, while poetically suggestive, does not quite extend an argument, and is no more than another rhetorical trick. Research is something that some people do.

## 14. What Literary Researchers Actually Do: Clarifying Terms

### *Alexander Search*

So this is how this debate has been going. I propose a definition and make inferences; Suman and Fabio say: no, the definition should actually be such and leads to contrary inferences. I say this is the public good of research, and they say the public good of research is actually that; I suggest this is how basic and applied research could be understood, and they say those should actually be understood in that different way. In this ping pong of arguments and counter arguments none of us are really going by careful evidence and accounting of research practices. We are all depending on a shared strategy, a common way of appealing to readers: we are expecting readers to recognise the strength or weakness of arguments according to their own experiences and preconceptions. We are expecting our arguments to be carried by readers being able to say, with their own experience in view, that ‘this observation sounds plausible, indeed more plausible than that observation.’

For all of us this strategy in presenting arguments has served to distract attention from the actual practices of research, from the things that researchers actually do. We have not been talking about what researchers actually do. Instead, we have simply been assuming that readers know all that already and will therefore go along with our arguments. But I am not wedded to this assumption. My interest is really in what specifically *literary* researchers actually do. If we go through those practices carefully, it will turn out that my definitions and central contention (as stated in I.1, “All literary research is...”) are unavoidable. Suman and Fabio are evidently more in their element when they do not have to talk about the actual practices of research – especially the nitty-gritty of *literary* research. They are happier taking it for granted that literary research is incommensurable with entrepreneurial activity, and the latter demeans literary research. But even under that rubric, they are unwilling to talk about the things that literary researchers actually do to make their points, and prefer instead to speak in broad abstractions (Suman says as much in I.12, “In Bad Faith”). They prefer to talk about larger concepts which are difficult to ground in actual research work.

And they are not alone. It seems to be widely taken for granted that research work such as the literary is being undermined, indeed erased, by the entrepreneurial university (the ‘entrepreneurial university’ is the catchphrase of the moment – Foss and Gibson eds. 2015 gives a useful cross-contextual and case-study-based account, with admittedly little attention to literary research). Given that, champions of literary research then seek to defend it from the entrepreneurial university. But they do not do so in terms of the actual disciplinary practices of such research; they prefer instead the larger idealistic abstraction of ‘the Humanities’ or ‘Liberal Education,’ and then speak nostalgically of ‘the University’ as the idealistic space where the Humanities *have to be* accommodated as an idealistic project. And their purchase on reality is always limited: so, Louis Menand (2010) champions the Humanities in terms of curricula; Martha Nussbaum (2010) defends the Humanities in terms of high-minded liberal principles which are indifferent to political economies; Stefan Collini (2012) defends the ideals of the Humanities and the University against higher education government policies of late; and variously the presumed incommensurability of the Humanities and enterprise in the University are articulated in Jonathan Bates ed. (2011), Michael Bérube and Jennifer Ruth (2015), a tiny bit sceptically in Helen Small (2013), and other such. Amidst this sweep of abstractions of the Humanities and the University, those who are concerned about ground-level research and academic work, the doing of research, appear as apologists *after* accepting the general incommensurability of Humanities research and entrepreneurial considerations. They seem timid and practical and their tone a bit wry, trying to stick adhesive bandages to cover up gaping wounds in the ideals of the Humanities and the University for beleaguered survival in real life (e.g. Coleman and Kamboureli eds. 2011; Zepeda and Mayock eds. 2014; Semenza and Sullivan, Jr. eds. 2015; Hutner and Mohamed eds. 2016; Hazelkorn, Benneworth and Gulbrandsen 2016).

For my argument, the kinds of publications cited are beside the point, and their idealism is misdirected. My argument is: literary research already is and could become more entrepreneurial. Not only do I not presume that literary research is incommensurable with entrepreneurial considerations, I maintain that all literary research is already or could become more entrepreneurial. No defence against the entrepreneurial university is called for. This seems evident to me not in terms of preconceived abstractions like the Humanities or the (liberal) University, but in terms of what literary researchers actually do, in disciplinary practice, in the work of reading, writing, investigating, interpreting, archiving, publicising, lecturing, debating, collaborating, etc.

Evidently, for my purpose then, the terms of this debate have to be sharpened at this stage. The debate needs to be focused squarely on what

literary researchers actually do on the disciplinary cliff face. The cliff face of literary research is institutionally structured. Two broad institutional formations bear upon it: I shall call them, *the University* and *the Ministry*. The University is my shorthand way of referring to any organisation that employs researchers and produces research, and includes higher education institutions, specialist research institutes, advanced studies centres, and the like. The Ministry, as far as my argument goes, designates public offices and agencies under relevant government ministries (those could be for education, human resource, innovation and skills, research and development, knowledge and culture ... whatever the going term is) which determine policy at state level and disburse public or not-for-profit funding for research. The Ministry, in brief, determines the regime at state level and sometimes across states (at international level) for the undertaking of research; and the University grounds that undertaking at an institutional level within that regime. There are other institutional formations which have a bearing on research, such as *Corporate Research Providers* and *Scholarly Publishers*. I will define those when arguments relevant to them are taken up.

Literary studies, we have been assuming, form a *discipline* and literary research is pursued within that discipline. In the spirit of clarifying my use of terms here, I understand *discipline* as primarily an institutional designation. So, disciplines in general signify in the following ways.

First, in the University, a discipline is used to identify a responsible unit of collectivity: e.g. a department or school or faculty of literature. This unit can be charged with being collectively responsible for its costs by accounting the benefits it generates for the public and the profits it generates for the University – therefore, held responsible for its contribution to the public good. In this sense the discipline-defined department can be made accountable for a devolved budget to some definable degree. That also means that all discipline-defined departments in the University need to then compete for budgetary allocations. Such competition is articulated in terms of the particular benefits and profits that disciplinary (discipline-specific) activity can generate.

Second, beyond or across the University, within the regime for research regulated by the Ministry, funding (public or private) can also be accountably disbursed according to disciplinary areas. For this kind of accounting, the competition for funding is also articulated in disciplinary terms – but, in this instance, articulations are offered directly by the University, or by disciplinary representatives from the University, and also by users of disciplinarily defined products (entrepreneurs and beneficiaries), and other stakeholders in research.

Third, at a general social level, disciplines enable loose professional solidarities irrespective of institutional affiliations or funding mechanisms. That is expressed in two different ways. On the one hand, disciplinary solidarity may give rise to (be nudged towards) cross-departmental or cross- or trans-University initiatives with entrepreneurial promise. That is properly where *interdisciplinarity* is located: the prefix *inter* obviously presumes the precedence of disciplines as organising units, and any activity that can be conceived across those units can then be undertaken as after-the-fact, without presenting any threat to institutional organisation. On the other hand, those loose professional solidarities can be garnered for quality checks and peer reviews which seem to confer validity to disciplinary enterprise *as if* not interfered with by institutional interests. Thus, benefits seem to be foregrounded rather than profits in disciplinary research.

Fourth, also at the general social level, and perhaps most importantly, disciplines enable a mechanism for being recognised or identified in particular ways, as bearing a certain kind of authority or a specific sort of reliability for consumers of disciplinarily branded products. Insofar as researchers are often the primary consumers of products by other researchers, the loose professional solidarity of disciplines also makes for identifiable market niches. Insofar as disciplinary products may have a larger than academic market, their disciplinary identification offers a way of profiling consumption patterns and targeting the larger market accordingly. These patterns are found in concrete form in publishers' and booksellers' catalogues, library shelves and indexes, performances of expertise in the mass media, prizes and awards, etc.

Insofar as research takes place in a discipline of literary studies, these significations of disciplinarity are often elided in favour of characteristic themes and practices, such as close reading, literary interpretation, analytical bibliography, literary history and so on. These seem then to constitute literary research, and define the work that literary researchers actually do. These materialise as the substantive work of research – as reading, writing, investigating, interpreting, archiving, publicising, lecturing, debating, collaborating, etc. Though these practices and themes and activities define literary research as *literary*, none of them can actually be understood as indifferent to or separated from the institutional conditions of literary studies as a *discipline*, i.e. in terms of the four ways of signifying disciplines above. Literary research is undertaken at the confluence of that which describes literary activity as literary and that which describes literary studies as a discipline. Disciplinarity and literariness merge inextricably in literary research.

With the entrepreneurial basis of literary research in mind, I will consider literary research as described here, in terms of what it actually



consists in within the conditions it is actually undertaken in. I will consider literary research thus under three broad headings below: as knowledge production, particularly in the University; in terms of scholarly publishing, with a special interest in the research monograph (often considered the mainstay of literary research); and with regard to leadership, or, specifically, leadership education.

## 15. Disciplining Research

*Suman Gupta*

Alexander is right (in I.14, “What Literary Researchers Actually Do”) to take this debate towards the on-the-ground practices and activities of researchers. He assumes that the kinds of things literary researchers actually do – ‘the work of reading, writing, interpreting, investigating, archiving, publicising, lecturing, debating, collaborating, etc.’ – occurs at a disciplinary level, on the ‘disciplinary cliff face,’ as he puts it. He then gives an account of how disciplinarity should be understood (in four points), and it is evident from this that, for Alexander, what literary researchers actually do has little basis in the intellectual necessity of disciplines. In fact, those activities are mostly powerfully subjected to institutional prerogatives exercised in the name of disciplines. Given that Alexander’s perspective is grounded in the profession and how professors (academic workers) generate profits for institutions, it makes sense that he insists that disciplinarity be defined in institutional terms.

In fact, Alexander’s arguments seem plausible insofar as we accept that institutionally defined disciplines are the structuring ground for research work. And yet, he is wrong in thinking that research is undertaken according to this view of disciplinarity, that researchers *actually* engage with research accordingly.

There is no doubt that once put into institutional accounting, research acquires and invests in a disciplinary identity and evolves some shared terminology and foci for reifying disciplinarity. Researchers become disciplined for organisational and professional purposes, or perhaps for entrepreneurial purposes. But I am yet to come across a research work – a scholarly text – that is identified as being literary research, written by persons affiliated to literature departments, which is in any understandable sense *purely literary*. Every such text addresses questions which are also addressed by researchers in other departments: linguistics, philosophy, history, sociology, politics, jurisprudence, anthropology, technology, biology, and so on. The *actual* work of research is always close to a sense of knowledge that precedes disciplinarity, a kind of continuum of knowledge. The institutional conditions offered for research work, and packaging of products from that work, impose a grid of disciplines on the continuum of

knowledge. Disciplines are meaningful after-the-fact for the actual practice of research.

So, a somewhat different understanding of disciplinarity from Alexander's is needed to grasp what researchers actually do, how a continuum of knowledge and institutionally defined disciplines are mutually negotiated. The University and its discipline-based segments did not appear ready-made so that research could be undertaken accordingly. There was a process involved, a historical process, which has left its trace in what researchers do now – still do – in the University. A few sketchy notes on this process follow; a proper reckoning with it would take up many volumes.

Most early reckonings with disciplines and with their institutional grounding were explicitly presented as after the fact of a continuum of knowledge – at least in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the modern University was an evolving institutional space. Numerous references could be cited; a few suffice to make the point briefly. Lawyer and logician Zachary Coke's *The Art of Logic* (1654) was written from outside the University (as the dedication to Oliver Cromwell says) and presented an early mapping of 'disciplines' in English, cohering with its current sense:

*Objective Disciplines:* Objective disciplines be such as handle things which are in Nature as Objects of our understanding, which are principally four. [...]

1. Divinity, called by the Greeks Theologie, which is the knowledge of God, and things Supernatural, as they are Supernatural, & c.

2. Jurisprudence, or Law which takes in beside the special Laws of God and Nature, the Canon, Civil Laws, the Law of Nations, our Laws Common, Statute and Municipal, & c.

3. Medicine or Physick, both the Speculative and the Practique.

4. Philosophy, which comprehends Metaphysics, which considereth things as they are such, & c. Also, Physiques, or natural Science; next of all Mathematicks, which contains Arithmetick, Geometry, Astronomy, Musick, Opticks, and last of all Ethicks, or Morals, containing Oeconomicks and Politicks, under which again (beside History) is comprised Strategicks, called Martial Discipline.

*Directive disciplines:* Directive Disciplines be such as handle not the things themselves to be known, nor do they inform or perfect the understanding of man in those things, but they prepare only some operation of man, and with framed Rules and Instruments do guide and direct it. (Coke 1654: 2)

In mapping knowledge thus, Coke's idea was not to find a space amongst disciplines, within some discipline or the other, but to carve out a fundamental area which is implicated in all of them. This consists in the 'cogitations of things' and the 'signification of cogitations of things,' which

he then elaborates as ‘logick.’ Eighteenth and early nineteenth century attempts to map knowledge in a panoptic manner through disciplinary divisions follow roughly the same pattern: Giambattista Vico’s *Principi di Scienza Nuova* (1725; abridged in English 2002) attempted a reconciliation between philosophy and philology; Denis Diderot and Jean-Baptiste D’Alembert’s attempt to systematise all knowledge in all disciplinary branches in the *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772; in English, see University of Michigan translation project) and Jakob Bielfeld’s attempt to summarise the same for popular consumption in *Les premiers traits de l’Erudition Universelle* (1767, in English 1770) were designed to foreground ‘reason’ as the episteme underpinning disciplines; August Comte’s *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830-1842; in English 1896) traversed disciplines to posit positivistic science as the episteme. Disciplinarity was then presented fairly consistently as after the fact and built upon some sort of underlying continuum of knowledge, whether conceived as logic, reason or science. Let us call this scholarly view of disciplines *knowledge-disciplines*. Through historical passages the practice of research is powerfully, through numerous conventions and norms of rigour and integrity, based on this understanding of knowledge-disciplines.

That the politico-economic organisation of the University according to disciplines (let us call this *institutional-disciplines*) could be at odds with the scholarly sense of disciplines (*knowledge-disciplines*) was the point of Immanuel Kant’s *Der Streit der Fakultäten* or *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798; in English 1992) – written at the cusp of the appearance of professional academia as we know it. Kant found that what he ironically called the ‘higher faculties’ (institutional units for the study of Law and Theology particularly, but he threw in Medicine too) were interfering with – censoring – the extension of reason (Kant’s essential episteme) from their domain in the ‘lower faculty,’ Philosophy. In brief, Law and Theology were formations of the state and accordingly exerted power in the University as institutional-disciplines. Philosophy felt entitled to extend itself to all domains in a knowledge-discipline manner; but whenever that bid threatened the purposes of the state embedded in the faculties of Law and Theology, it was exhorted to confine itself to its lower institutional-discipline status and make itself subservient to the higher institutional-disciplinary status of Law and Theology. The purpose of the University at the behest of the state, rather than a conception of knowledge, was activated through the organisational place and identification of disciplines.

Jumping around 200 years ahead, when Jacques Derrida looked back to Kant’s *The Conflict* – “Mochlos; or, The Conflict of the Faculties” (1992 [1980]) – he found it difficult to grasp the salience of the University in the way Kant could. This was not so much because he was unable to share Kant’s conviction in the episteme of reason, but because he could barely

recognise the University as Kant knew it. Derrida found that the state now does not need the University to produce knowledge that sustains its authority, preferring to outsource that sort of knowledge production instead. Consequently, the state does not need to invest in any faculty or discipline particularly, certainly not to the extent of troubling to notice a conflict between higher and lower faculties. Moreover, a force outside Kant's University had taken charge of managing knowledge production, both outside and critically *inside* the University:

a class so defined of businessmen or technicians of knowledge [...]. They are every responsible figure in the public or private administration of the university, every 'decision-maker' in matters of budgets and the allocation or distribution of resources (bureaucrats in a ministry, 'trustees' etc.), every administrator of publications and archivization, every editor, journalist, etc. (Kant 1992 [1980]: 9)

In other words, this is a class of academic leaders. Whether one feels any conviction in the knowledge-discipline approach to scholarship is immaterial now, it does not matter; there are only institutional-disciplines, apprehensible only in the manner presented by Alexander in the four points above (in I.14, "What Literary Researchers Actually Do"). Disciplines exist to serve profits and benefits as defined for the entrepreneurial University by academic leaders.

But in the practice and pursuit of researchers, in what academic researchers *actually* do, the conception of a continuum of knowledge that precedes disciplines is constantly apparent. It is apparent through historical drift; through manoeuvres around conventions, norms and paradigms; through subscriptions to scholarly integrity and rigour; and within the features of the very discourse that is recognised as academic. There might not be a consensual episteme for what academic researchers actually do, but there is a consistency of practice which constantly suggests a continuum of knowledge – before it is disguised as discipline-specific for institutional neatness, or before rediscovering it as interdisciplinary.

Most long views of the development of the academic profession, of the professionalisation of academia and the emergence of the University as we have it now, recognise disciplines as institutional interference and tools for disciplining researchers. As a case in point, James Turner's *Philology* (2014) (mentioned by Alexander in I.3, "The Tricky Anteriority of Literature") concludes a wide-ranging account of the division of academic disciplines away from a philological scholarly tradition with a passionate denunciation of disciplinarity as that is understood now:

The past does not prophecy the future. But perhaps some day humanistic scholarship will, once again, inhabit more wide-ranging academic divisions than it does today. If so, erudition will command a higher premium: more extensive knowledge, multiple languages will be required, to broaden the monoglot, narrowly focused scholarship increasingly common in the humanities during the past half century. [...] At any rate, when the time for change comes – whatever form that takes – it will help to remember that the humanities amount to more than a set of disciplines, each marooned on its own island. (386)

### *Alexander Search*

Suman's laborious attempt to liberate 'a continuum of knowledge' from institutionally-defined disciplines to inform what literary researchers actually do seems to me to have no connection to what literary researchers actually do. The strange anachronism of referring back to notions like 'pure reason' and 'positive science' and 'philology' to make this argument speaks for itself. Researchers are mostly done with all that now, except as subjects of historical interest. It is impossible to think about what researchers actually do without considering where they do it: that is, mainly in departments and schools and faculties according to disciplines in the University. Research practices and institutional spaces are umbilically tied to each other. What is the point of looking for some distinction by looking back nostalgically to the past, probably more a fantastic than an idealised past?

### *Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Alexander's is before anything a bureaucrat's perspective, and it is enlightening to see how his supposedly purely economic approach leads him into a kind of rationality that is not unlike that of a state functionary filling out (or rather devising) a form. Anything that does not fit is immediately discarded; Alexander can only think through transparent separation. That is why he is incapable of identifying any tension in the relationship between literature and research, and why he calls Suman's nice little genealogy of disciplines an 'anachronism.' Then there is his visceral inability to allow the slightest space to experience. Alexander is allergic to all words that could take things out of their proper places: 'tension,' 'negativity,' 'non-identity,' not to mention 'dialectics.' Anything that could join together subject and object (as pleasure, for instance, or the personification of literature) is inconceivable to him. Because literature is very much constituted by mixture, it lets itself be shaped by Alexander orderliness, but at the price of becoming something so inane that it eventually loses

any claim to deserve being studied. I wonder if that is not Alexander's aim after all.

We should bring history into this debate. Literature is not an obvious object in the way plants or numbers are; in an important sense, it is what it has become. The past cannot be dissociated from the present. Not that long ago, the University was not literature's decisive social space for its reproduction, and the greatest part of literary works was not written to be analysed (or researched). Mostly literature did not even see itself as literature in the way we do. Alexander's position forces him to disengage origin from validity, *Ursprung* from *Geltung*. In order to have our representation of literature as a space of freedom of enunciation, an autonomous sphere where anything can be said – which was a fundamental achievement – its connection to unliterary practices had to be severed. To study a sermon as a literary artefact, its original context in belief has to be expunged as belief. In other words, the emergence of literature as an *object*, as a *construction* (to be researched) only takes place with the loss of something else, which should be taken into account. One can trace this logic to the very beginning in the division of intellectual and manual labour. Literature thus appears as a space where freedom and guilt are intertwined.

## 16. Two Notes: Public Funding and the Entrepreneur

### *Alexander Search*

Looking back to the various interventions in this debate, and before moving on to the areas I mentioned in I.14 (“What Literary Researchers Actually Do”), it occurs to me that there are still a few terms which we are using at cross-purposes. More precisely, Suman and Fabio are thinking about and using these terms with implicit assumptions which I do not share. One is ‘public funding,’ which Fabio, for one, seems to consider free of entrepreneurial activity in his comment at the end of I.10 (“Changes and Futures”). The other term is ‘entrepreneur,’ which seems to evoke an image of specific self-interested persons or agents. In this debate, I often seem to stand in for this preconceived greedy person, the butt of Suman’s and Fabio’s discontent. Both terms could do with some clarifying before proceeding to what literary researchers actually do.

Let me start with *public funding*.

There are broadly two streams of investment into the capital circuit which entrepreneurial activity can capitalise on: private (individuals and small firms and large corporations) and public (government and government-supported organisations). For academic research enterprise, especially in a literary vein, the latter is as significant as the former, and will, I suspect, crop up often as this debate proceeds. Public funding that may enter the capital circuit consists in all the monies that may be realised by state organisations (the government) through direct or indirect taxation, and from returns on existing investments after ensuring that the sectors invested in remain sustainable (bearing in mind also that some of this funding has to be maintained in reserve).

Among champions of the Humanities and the liberal University – far from confined to Fabio and Suman – there is often some confusion about the purpose of public funds. This confusion is apparent in Fabio’s comment at the bottom of I.10 (“Changes and Futures”), when he says: “The simple idea that would reduce all your arguments to naught is that the state should fund the university system and let academics do as they please with the money.” Fabio simply misunderstands the purpose of public funds. Fabio seems to think that public funds are a bottomless pot that



could be used to generate benefits for all and be kept out of profit-making circulations. Given that the size of this pot depends on profitable capital circulations, this is naïve even when that pot seems to have a large surplus which could be put directly towards benefits for all. Perhaps Fabio is assuming that the state, as he puts it, has a monopoly on investments in the capital cycle – and even in those circumstances, the state would be a sorry fellow if the pot ran dry.

It is true that some part of public funds could be put towards necessary and basic benefits for all in various sectors of social life. The principal purpose of public funding is, however, to be used as a guarantee for private investors to keep investing and consumers to keep consuming and thereby to enable a dynamic capital cycle. Thereby capital grows through continuous profit-making and consumption and re-investment.

So public funding in the academic sector may be used to support some necessary blue-skies thinking and certain minority areas of investigation, and to ensure the basic sustainability of the sector. But public funding of the academic sector is principally for the purpose of:

- developing infrastructures that encourage private funding of academia (i.e. making the academic sector profit making in itself);
- encouraging entrepreneurial activity by providing appropriate knowledge towards product development, and skilled workers to ensure quality production;
- channelling entrepreneurial tenets among communities and the public generally;
- encouraging citizenship values and habits (being law abiding, ethically concerned, etc.) which, while not directly entrepreneurial, make for an amenable environment for secure investments;
- clarifying, and sometimes moulding, the niches and characteristics of the market to facilitate all possible sectors of enterprise.

Moving on to the idea of the *entrepreneur*: talk of *entrepreneurial* activities and interests in Humanities circles usually conjures the image of individuals undertaking those activities and owning those interests, persons out to make money for themselves through business. This association has settled in through the constant dissemination of stories featuring individual protagonists in the world of business and finance – heroes and villains, glamorous and seedy, successful and thwarted, real-life and fictional. Such individuals appear to have a direct and self-interested relationship with large politico-economic arrangements, and are often promoted as the heart of liberal capitalism. The image of the individual entrepreneur appears

with clearly visualised verve even though all know that it is principally organisations and institutions – let us call them *corporations* – that are entrepreneurial, that make investments and ground entrepreneurial activities, to which the profits of enterprise accrue. Suman and Fabio will no doubt observe that this makes little difference; corporations are fronts for entrepreneurial individuals to make money for themselves and become rich. That is true to some extent, but not entirely. Through the enterprise of corporations some individuals become rich, some make a living, and some survive. Insofar as the enterprise of corporations goes, *all* within their collective fold, irrespective of their returns, serve the entrepreneurial thrust. Some do so as shareholders and some as stakeholders, some as leaders and some as followers, and all partake of the profits of the corporation’s enterprise accordingly. The entrepreneurial drive is the corporation’s – hence, that of the entrepreneurial University, Ministry, publishing house, media firm and so on.

To some degree, confusion prevails because in liberal jurisprudence there is a blurring of boundaries between enterprising individuals and enterprising corporations. In a legal sense, the latter are treated as individuals, with some provisions whereby their legal individuality can be *represented* by individual persons (usually the leaders). The historical evolution of this legal rationale was examined in F.W. Maitland’s (2003) essays “The Corporation Sole” (1900), “The Crown as Corporation” (1901), “Trust and Corporation” (1904); the rationale of contemporary liberal jurisprudence in this regard is laid out in Hans Kelsen’s *General Theory of Law and State* (2006 [1946]), Ch.9 – and, with some fine-tuning according to context, those rationalisations still hold. This confusion aids the constant reification of the specific entrepreneurial individual as a synecdoche for the entrepreneurial corporation. Such confusion feeds into Suman’s earlier observations on my ‘performative contradiction’ (I.5, “Are These Serious Arguments?”), wondering whether I could speak of entrepreneurial literary research without a profit motive. Significantly, that confusion has been variously expanded by the popularity of Foucault’s phrase ‘entrepreneur of himself’ (see I.10, “Changes and Futures”).

For a person to be entrepreneurial does not necessarily mean that she expects to make profits only for or even at all for herself; it means that she makes profits for some corporation she is associated with. That is clear enough from where I began: ‘All literary research is or should be conducted with the ultimate purpose of *generating profits for some enterprising sector of the economy; that is, through some corporate or governmental organisation.*’

## 17. A Certain Kind of Pressure

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

About Alexander's language: for me, perhaps because I am a Brazilian, terms like 'public good' sound strangely aloof and cold. If you live in a country marked by so much social inequality, so much need and privation, expressions like 'distribution of benefits' seem devoid of meaning. Anything short of the suppression of hunger and the satisfaction of the population's basic needs sounds like ideological manipulation. Of course, in a situation like this, literary studies have to be justified. Antonio Candido argued in "O Direito à Literatura" (2011 [1988]), a famous text in Brazil, that literature should be classified as a basic, as opposed to a secondary, need, because it helps organise experience. This claim may be refuted, but I take it to be revealing of a certain kind of pressure that can be easily felt by professors feeling called upon to legitimise their work – a pressure that is often self-imposed. My point here is not that one should get rid of novels and go do social work (or go to the guerrilla front), but rather that such an intellectual climate forces one to relate to this issue. In short, then, it may be that it would be harder for a Brazilian Alexander to sustain his position on the basis of the English Alexander. I wonder if he would not be for the near suppression of research altogether, turning to language studies in the University as just a matter of instrumentally mastering the language and leaving writers alone to do their work (and starve) without the burden of criticism.

*Suman Gupta*

I daresay Alexander is not unacquainted with that pressure also. Strange as it may seem to Fabio, uncertain employment, unemployment, subsistence-level living, scrambling for basic needs, homelessness, even starvation, are far from being unknown in Britain. All those are complicated by various levels of social stratifications, prejudice and scapegoating. The pressure that emanates from the constant exacerbation of these bears upon many in Britain, including professors in the broad sense, including in literary studies.

Those aspects of Alexander's language (or the language of the entrepreneurial scholar) that Fabio finds alienating seem to me characteristic of the staid language of bureaucracy and business – and academic research that supports those. The carefully defined and understated use of phrases such as 'public good,' 'benefits,' 'opportunities,' 'redistribution,' etc. form a kind of net across policy and consultation papers, mission statements, strategic priority memoranda, budget statements, and so on that circulate in various institutions, and in communiques and recommendations from independent think-tanks and consultancy firms and academic consultants. I think of it as the language that informs the *functioning* of liberal capitalism, perpetuated as a specialised form of what Alvin Gouldner (1979) called a Culture of Critical Discourse (CCD) – a liberal capitalist CCD (Alexander refers to Gouldner in I.3, "The Tricky Anteriority of Literature"). An entrepreneurial rationale is now the glue that sticks the various manifestations of this discourse together.

I know that this language does not differ significantly in those kinds of sources, whether in Britain or in comparatively less affluent contexts, such as India. I have had the opportunity, for instance, to compare British and Indian higher education and language policy documents, and consult various reports from private, public and non-governmental bodies in both countries. I am constantly struck by the linguistic assonances, the common denominators of liberal capitalist CCD, found in such British and Indian texts. And they are also found in similar texts from numerous other countries, and from transnational bodies, that I happen to have come across. Charting the current common denominators of governmental and business discourse across the globe could be a very useful research project. Does Brazil differ in this respect?

The certain pressure that Fabio speaks of, that Candido expressed tangentially and Fabio expresses directly here, is exerted through the language of public politics. I think of this as the affective language of political advocacy and exhortation. It is apt to appear in competitive moments within the liberal capitalist establishment (during elections, for instance), and in texts representing alignments that are marginalised or excluded from the liberal capitalist establishment (manifestos, investigative reports, etc., and, yes, radical or 'politically conscientious' academic publications). And here too, insofar as I am aware of the relevant texts, I am constantly struck by the similar language of radical or activist or social-justice proponents in India and Britain. That too could be a terrific research project: charting the common linguistic denominators of political advocacy across the globe.

I do not think the English Alexander and the Brazilian Alexander and the Indian Alexander will have any difficulty seeing eye to eye, any more than the Brazilian Candido and the English Candido and the Indian

Candido. It will be a matter of a few contextually nuanced translations and modifications of each-others' utterances.

Fabio's question then is: is it not possible that entrepreneurial literary scholars may be so entrepreneurial under pressured economic circumstances that they will end up wiping out literary studies as we understand it? My own feeling is: yes, it is very possible. It depends on the pressure in material terms, and the pressure brought through public political advocacy. There are possible deterrents. For instance, nationalism could make common ground with entrepreneurialism and then, to sustain itself, cultivate a certain kind of national literary studies despite the disadvantages thereof for enterprise. So, in India, while English literary studies are being gradually dispensed with in favour of functional English language teaching by a nationalist establishment, there has appeared a growing interest and investment in the literatures of various Indian languages – especially dominant Indian languages. Another possibility is that literary studies will not be dispensed with because, even amidst economically straitened circumstances, it will actually prove to be profitable and a productive area of entrepreneurial activity. I think that is the direction Alexander is heading for.

### *Alexander Search*

Suman's final point can be continued. He tends to take a pessimistic view of deterrents to the disappearance of literary studies. When Fabio says that a sort of pressure to act for the alleviation of poverty might do away with literary studies, he seems to forget that Brazil also has affluent people. So, by 2009 figures, around 25% of the population lived in poverty, but the rest did not; and the richest 20% earned about 15 times more than the poorest 20%, and the richest 10% around 31 times more than the poorest 10%. So, while that concern about the poor might worry some researchers and some politicians, the affluent and rich (including those worried academics and politicians) would continue to consume according to their means – and they would be in the eye of academic entrepreneurs. These middle and upper classes would be eager to enhance their cultural capital and distinguish their success and lifestyles from those of the poor and cultivate 'high culture.' They can be depended upon to sustain literary studies as such. This class of consumers has to be catered to by the University and is good for enterprise, necessary for the growth of academia and general economic growth. They would be happy to pay for their high culture.

*Leandro Pasini*

I think Suman is overstating the universality of the subjective, cultural and national experience by assuming hastily the interchangeability of Indian, English and Brazilian *Candidos* as well as Norwegian, Chinese, Argentine and Indonesian *Alexanders*. In my opinion, this equation demands a little more than ‘a few contextually-nuanced translations and modifications of each-others’ utterances,’ since the historical differences cannot be played as a superficial translation issue, as if the literary and critical languages did not reflect different positions in modern history and in the capitalist world-system. I have tried to visualise the ‘English *Candido*’ and came up with a mixture of Matthew Arnold and Raymond Williams, though Fabio did not agree with the comparison. I wonder what the other *Candidos* would be like. Similarly, I imagine the ‘Brazilian *Alexander*’ not as a neoliberal theoretician who thinks in terms of the public good, applied research and profit making, but as an academic leader who emphatically imports the latest theoretical fashions without taking pains to understand what she is doing. The ‘Brazilian *Alexander*’ may well import the ideas of ‘English *Alexander*,’ by the way, with contextually destabilising and ham-handed effect. This academic leader would rather commit herself to the global language of the entrepreneurial literary scholar, without much (if any) critical thinking.

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

The relationship between the language used to write about a literary object and the language of the literary object is an important one. A bureaucratic form of expression, which, shunning ambiguity and a personal style, defends full transparency and objectivity will get close to commodification even if it is against neoliberalism. I do not mean to say that critics should try to write like novelists or poets, but that an ideal of clarity present in natural science and very easily transposed on to ‘research’ in other areas could do violence to its object. By and large, I find that my undergraduate students’ representation of what literature is goes contrary to Alexander’s and is closer to my conception of literature. All the ideas that Alexander objects to in my conception resonate with my students: my alleged romanticism and idealism, my concern with ‘life,’ ‘experience,’ ‘pleasure,’ ‘expression,’ and so forth. Many of those students go to literature as something that promises some form of otherness. ‘Research,’ as Alexander would have it, with all its affinity to engineering, may draw students away and weaken, and eventually kill, literary studies.

Concerning Alexander’s argument that literature will always be there because it will always work as a means of distinction and prestige for the

upper classes, this will not necessarily be the case. Historically, literature only became a means of marking class superiority after the rise of the bourgeoisie. It may very well be that under new circumstances, the ultra-rich will find other means of signifying their social position. Literature has the disadvantage of involving too much work and concentration. One can find super-expensive objects in the market that fulfil this role more competently. I do not have empirical data for this, but what I can see in Brazil in cultural terms is a de-stratification. The culture industry has become so powerful and so massively concentrated that certain cultural products pervade society vertically, being consumed by virtually all – which of course gives one a misleading sense of democracy.

In relation to this, I always like to recall the prize that the Brazilian Academy of Letters awarded to soccer player Ronaldinho Gaucho and coach Wanderly Luxemburgo in April 2011 (Niskier 2011). By giving them the Machado de Assis Medal, its highest honour, the Academy (the most canonical of canonical institutions) was not conferring cultural capital on them. Rather, the Academy was trying to absorb such capital from the soccer team that both worked for at the time, Flamengo. In sum, literature is precarious in Brazil even as a way of endowing prestige.

## **II. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: THE UNIVERSITY**



## 18. Away From the Monopolistic University

### *Alexander Search*

When Suman mentioned (in I.15, “Disciplining Research”) Derrida’s essay “Mochlos; or, The Conflict of the Faculties” (1992 [1980]), I was reminded of an observation in it:

Nowadays [...] – and this is a first limit to the translation of the Kantian text in our politico-epistemological space – there can be very serious border-crossings between non-university centres of knowledge and university faculties claiming at once to be doing research and transmitting knowledge, to be producing and reproducing knowledge. [...] In the days of Kant this ‘outside’ could be confined to the margin of the university. This is no longer so certain or simple. Today, in any case, the university is what has become the margin. [...] The state no longer entrusts certain investigations to a university that cannot accept the structures or control the techno-political stakes. [...] The state deprives it of the right to do research, reserved for academies without teachers. This arises most often from calculations of techno-political profitability as figured by the state, or by national (or international), state (or trans-state) capitalist powers, as one might imagine happening with the storage of information or the constitution of data banks, where the university member has to surrender any representation as a ‘guardian’ or ‘trustee’ of knowledge. [...] And since the university, either for reasons of structure or from its attachment to old representations, cannot avail itself of certain kinds of research, or operate within them, or transmit them, it feels menaced in certain places around its own body [...]. (8)

I recognise in this the curious idealistic notion of the University that Kant, Derrida and, more immediately, Fabio and Suman gesture towards nostalgically and seemingly want to defend or retrieve. This is the notion of the University as monopolistic producer of disinterested knowledge, without interference or competition from the state (the Ministry, in my terms), non-university centres of knowledge, and other entrepreneurial corporations – truly, the University as ivory tower. It is in the nature of nostalgia to reconstruct its ostensibly remembered object in desirable hues that the object never had, hues that simply reveal the fantasies of the nostalgia-struck.

It seems self-evident to me as a principle that no person or organisation should have a monopoly on knowledge production if knowledge is to serve the public good. Knowledge is best used in the public interest if it can be used by whoever can maximise its benefits and potential for profit generation; conversely, whoever produces knowledge in this vein should be encouraged. In fact, it is best if whoever is in a position to produce knowledge in this vein could programmatically work in collaborative or complementary ways so that the public good is maximised. Fortunately, such nostalgic idealism has not held things back: academic leaders and followers in the University know that in practice knowledge production in the public interest is most effective if the University does not claim or pretend monopolistic prerogatives. Collaborative and, sometimes, strategically complementary efforts in knowledge production between the University, Ministry, non-university centres and other corporations are the understandable norm.

However, Derrida does point to an important fact when he observes that the state – the Ministry – does not depend now (if ever it has) on the University for the research and knowledge needed for its entrepreneurial purposes and governance of the public good. It usually takes recourse to ‘non-university centres of knowledge.’ This is certainly the case when the Ministry needs research to crystallise policy directions and strategic priorities with effect on the University. In fact, the University also does not depend on itself (its faculties, schools, departments, centres and institutes) for the research and knowledge needed for its entrepreneurial purposes, and also takes recourse to ‘non-university centres of knowledge.’

There are two kinds of research production that the University concerns itself with. One, the kind of research that informs the University’s functioning as a corporation with entrepreneurial interests and benefit-generation responsibilities. Let us call this *Corporate Research*. Two, the kind of research which the University can variously use as a commodity, or offer as a service, to realise profits and extend benefits from research consumers – thereby meeting its mandate to serve the public good. Let us call this *Academic Research*.

For Corporate Research, the University (and sometimes parts thereof) often commissions ‘non-university centres of knowledge,’ sometimes alongside conducting its own research, and sometimes without doing so. The Ministry also routinely commissions Corporate Research from ‘non-university centres of knowledge,’ though sometimes it may also directly commission a proven expert from the University alongside. Academic Research is predominantly done by researchers employed in the University, embedded in the faculties, schools, departments, centres and institutes therein as professors (in the broad sense).

Insofar as this debate focuses particularly on literary researchers, and more generally on professors in any research area (whose profession is in the University), we are interested mainly in Academic Research. To grasp how that serves entrepreneurship, it is useful to first briefly take account of the Corporate Research which the University commissions from outside. After that it will be easier to articulate the specific entrepreneurial thrust of Academic Research as distinct from Corporate Research. To do this we need a sharper understanding of what Derrida called 'non-university centres of knowledge.' There are various recognisable terms which are captured in that phrase: independent think-tanks, private consultancy firms, organisational research providers, autonomous enterprise research centres, higher education/academic service providers, etc. – and even not-for-profit foundations (wherein project-specific profits are accounted such that they do not accrue to the corporate body). Let us call these *Corporate Research Providers*.

The main difference between the Corporate Research Provider and the University is not, as is often thought, that the former does not concern itself with benefits for all (is exclusively profit driven) or does not involve itself in pedagogy like the University, or has different funding mechanisms from the University's. In fact, Corporate Research Providers often do undertake some benefit generation and offer well-defined and targeted education services, including direct teaching and learning programmes. Their funding mechanisms are not different from some sectors of the University, and could include significant public and not-for-profit funding, and they could have charitable (NGO) status. Also, the Corporate Research Provider often contracts professors from the University as consultants to fulfil their commissions. The Corporate Research Provider frequently recruits professors from the University to be paid or honorary executive or advisory board members. Indeed, sometimes a Corporate Research Provider may choose to set up as a University (or have a subsidiary operation as a University). But usually they choose not to, because their entrepreneurial interests are best served by maintaining their independence from the University and autonomy from the Ministry – by having a distinct identity as research provider. In other words, the Corporate Research Provider's business interests are best served by maintaining a clear distinction between the Corporate Research which they provide and the Academic Research which is associated with the University.

The main difference between the Corporate Research Provider and the University is in their legal status and public brands. The arrangements for public registration and financial accounting, and the processes of institutional regulation and validation, follow different formal pathways. Consequently, the public appearance and expectations of them are quite different.

There is a small complexity there which should be noted: though the Corporate Research Provider is distinct from the University, and the former's prerogative on providing Corporate Research is separate from the latter's on providing Academic Research, the Corporate Research Provider might in a logistical and legal sense be both *within* the University as well as *outside*. Numerous University institutions house and own enterprise-research centres, institutes and consultancy organisations, which are effectively Corporate Research Providers for other academic and business corporations. These are generally made autonomous within the University with proprietorship (i.e. outside the regulations which govern Academic Research workers) and set up as self-funding units (i.e. they are separated from the accounts and budgets that attach to academic faculties of the University). Arguably, these nevertheless gain something from being covered by the University brand and make some contribution to University reserves. It is, in this sense, possible for Corporate Research Providers to be both *inside* and *outside* the University at the same time.

Obviously, there are interpenetrations between the University and the Corporate Research Provider. This is both in terms of occasional organisational overlaps and in terms of certain researchers who move between Academic Research and Corporate Research and are formally both professors in the University and consultants of the Corporate Research Provider.

We may therefore wonder why the University needs to commission Corporate Research Providers at all. After all, it is possible for the University to directly ask appropriate employees who are Academic Researchers to simply turn their attention to particular Corporate Research issues according to need – in return for a bonus or some career incentive. Or the University could ask Academic Researchers from another University to do so, perhaps for a fee and also some profile boosting. Amongst other things, that would be more cost-effective than commissioning Corporate Research Providers. The market determined costs of commissioning Corporate Research Providers can be high. Academic Researchers who are employees and more than capable of doing Corporate Research cost much less (could be fairly selfless in this regard).

Evidently there is some entrepreneurial advantage to the University (as to the Corporate Research Provider) in keeping Corporate Research and Academic Research distinct, and the agencies which ostensibly produce them identifiably different. Some attention to the specific practices surrounding Corporate Research is called for, and that in turn is likely to throw a clarifying light on Academic Research.

# 19. The Corporate Research that Universities Commission

## Alexander Search

The kind of Corporate Research Provider that is commissioned by the University, as described in II.18 (“Away From the Monopolistic University”), usually includes firms which cater to a wide range of businesses and organisations apart from those in the academic sector. Considerations of confidentiality and market sensitivity often make it difficult to track commissions linking specific University institutions with specific Corporate Research Provider firms. However, the website publicity of Corporate Research Provider firms, together with a broad grasp of documents which circulate internally in firms and institutions, allows for a reasonable grasp of links. Here are a few examples of Corporate Research Provider firms with some of their publicised University sector clients (and in some instances their clients from the Ministry) – mainly focused on the UK, but also noting some in USA, Australia and New Zealand, in 2010-2015:

Corporate Research Provider and brief description of services (see list of websites at the end of this chapter)	University / Ministry
<b>B2B</b> (‘business to business market research studies’)	University of Manchester, Huddersfield University, Tufts University
<b>Deloitte</b> (‘audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, tax, and related services’)	University of New South Wales, London Metropolitan University, New Mexico State University Universities Australia, Universities New Zealand, The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) UK

## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

<b>DJS Market Research</b> ('offers a range of services from identifying market research requirements, devising a suitable programme, through to project implementation and reporting findings')	Imperial College London, Open University Business School, Open University, Oxford Brookes University Universities Central Council on Admissions UK (UCAS), Research Councils UK (RCUK)
<b>Ipsos MORI</b> ('specialise in brand communication, advertising and media research, consumer, retail & shopper and healthcare research, customer and employee relationship management research, and social & political and reputation research [...] also offer a range of solutions for online, telephone, face-to-face, mobile and omnibus fieldwork')	University of Oxford, Queen Mary University London, Harvard University, University of Leeds, Cardiff University
<b>Spencer du Bois</b> ('Brand positioning, key messaging, brand architecture, employee brand engagement, research, naming, identities, campaigns, visual systems, digital communications, literature, tone of voice...')	Imperial College Business School; National Union of Students; Royal Society of Chemistry; Cass Business School; Aston University; Monash Warwick University Alliance; University of Cambridge; University of Hull; University of the West of Scotland
<b>Viewforth Consulting</b> ('a range of research and consultancy relating to higher and further education as well as providing advice and guidance on higher education policy issues at both sectoral and individual institutional level')	Dublin City University, University of Brighton, Leeds Trinity University, University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University, University College Dublin, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University Universities UK

Websites quoted are listed at the bottom of this chapter

The kinds of Corporate Research that University institutions commission are usually to do with corporate governance (e.g. financial management, market engagement, recruitment, branding, policy response, product design, restructuring). These indicate the areas in which University leaders are reluctant to take recourse to Academic Researchers in their employ (or employed elsewhere in the University sector) irrespective of their fitness to the purpose of conducting Corporate Research.

However, commissioning may also include supplementing or feeding Academic Research. Thus, to pick one among numerous examples,

commissions undertaken by Ipsos MORI for University institutions on 'Race, Faith and Cohesion' in the area of Social Sciences around 2011, and detailed on its website, include the following (quotations are from the website listed at the bottom of this chapter):

- **University of Oxford – Managing ethnic diversity (2009-ongoing):** 'The aim of the overall project is to evaluate Robert Putnam's predictions that areas with high levels of ethnic diversity manifest low levels of social trust. The study comprises a nationally representative survey supplemented by an ethnic minority boost survey, with 1600 interviews in total. Ipsos MORI contributed to the questionnaire design and carried out cognitive testing to refine the questions.'
- **Queen Mary University – Survey of Muslims (2011-2012):** 'Ipsos MORI conducted a survey of Muslims living in two locations in Britain, East London and Bradford, with the intention of understanding pre-radicalisation. Interviews comprised questions on religious beliefs, political views, sympathies for violent and non-violent actions and to measure vulnerability amongst respondents.'
- **The Migration Observatory at Oxford University - Understanding public opinion on immigration (2011):** 'Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the Migration Observatory to conduct a nationally representative survey of British adults on their attitudes to immigration and perception of immigrants.'
- **University of Leeds – Living with Difference (2011):** 'The aim of this study is to measure levels of social prejudice with a representative sample of residents in two cities: Leeds in England and Warsaw in Poland. We are conducting 1,500 face-to-face interviews in both cities. The questions cover the full range of equality strands plus additional characteristics or circumstances that could generate hostile attitudes; religion, is of course, one of the issues covered.'
- **Cardiff University – Survey of Muslims (2010):** 'Cardiff University commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a two-wave survey of Muslims living in Britain. The first wave was face-to-face with the follow-up interview by telephone. The principal objective of the survey was to examine contextual and psychological predictors of a sense of British identity, political participation and attitudes towards violent extremism among Muslims living in Britain. Ipsos MORI worked with the team at Cardiff on developing the questionnaire, which included a number of sensitive questions.'
- **Harvard University – Social attitudes survey (2008-2009):** 'Harvard University, with some additional funding from Manchester University and Notre Dame University (Paris), commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a random probability survey using a questionnaire based on the British Social Attitudes Survey. The survey was conducted amongst Muslims in Great Britain with a parallel survey amongst the general population in Northern

Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Great Britain. The objective of the research was to find out whether there are significant differences in social, political and religious attitudes between the groups surveyed and, if so, what these are.’

Sifting through such examples of Academic Research commissioned from Corporate Research Providers could clarify where either the University lacks ability and infrastructure or receives project-funding which facilitates such commissioning. It is also possible that the research questions addressed in these kinds of Academic Research projects have a particular relevance to governance, which may also justify recourse to Corporate Research Providers. I have been unable to find much reliable and citable information on the financial costs of such commissioning. Those are likely to account for not insignificant proportions of the University’s income, including public and not-for-profit funding, and reserves.

There are sound entrepreneurial reasons for the University and the Ministry to make this investment. They commission research from Corporate Research Providers, especially of the sort that bears upon University and academic governance, to ensure that such research is *independent* and secure: i.e. is not influenced by partisan or vested interests, and is controlled by the commissioning party. If such Corporate Research were obtained by a University institution from suitably experienced Academic Researchers employed in that institution, then the findings and recommendations may be massaged by those researchers to secure or enhance their position in the institution, possibly at the expense of other stakeholders (like academic leaders, administrators, non-researching tutors, students and other clients, end users). If such Corporate Research were obtained by a University institution from suitably qualified Academic Researchers from other University institutions (constituted like a peer-review panel), then those researchers may still massage the data in a general way to favour academic stakeholders at the expense of other stakeholders.

Besides, since all University institutions are in competition with each other in the same market, the latter path could adversely affect the competitiveness of the University institution commissioning this research. The point of such commissions is to gain a competitive edge. The University institution would lose the competitive advantage it expects from its commissioned research if other institutions got hold to it. The Corporate Research Provider guarantees that the University which commissions it will have control of the relevant Corporate Research output. Actually, Academic Researchers generally tend to take security and confidentiality of research relatively lightly. They often have a strong conviction in making knowledge public to maximise benefits and forget that profit making



depends on security of some knowledge. Academic Researchers tend to be leaky.

Against the claim of independence that the Corporate Research Provider offers for the commissioning University, it may be argued that this practice of commissioning also possibly skews research. Corporate Researchers may massage the commissioned research to favour University governance against the interests of academic workers. It is academic leaders who do the commissioning, and they form a stakeholder body whose perspective of the University may not coincide with those of academic workers (researchers, non-research tutors, students). Their understanding of the profit-making function of the University may not coincide with the benefit-generation responsibility that Academic Researchers particularly feel the University has. It would be understandable for Corporate Research Provider firms to skew research so as to suit the perspectives and interests of academic leaders who commission on behalf of their University institutions. That would help Corporate Research Providing firms to strengthen their service-provider-to-client relationships with University institutions. However, this argument does not hold. Academic leaders in the University are appointed to maximise the entrepreneurial interests of the University for all stakeholders and thus maintain the public good. Their own interests are aligned with the greater entrepreneurial purpose of the University in a way that no other stakeholder group's is (more than any Academic-Researcher group can be). They can be depended upon to make the best use for all stakeholders of the truly independent information and advice that Corporate Research Provider firms offer.

It may also be argued that the Corporate Research Provider's independence from the University that commissions it comes with a handicap. Corporate Research thus misses out on the insider-knowledge and experience which Academic Researchers can bring to it on behalf of the University. That argument too is easily refuted. As observed in II.18 ("Away From the Monopolistic University"), the interpenetration between the Corporate Research Provider and the University ensures that the advantages that Academic Researches could bring to Corporate Research are availed by Corporate Research Providers. The boundaries between the Corporate Research Provider and the University are porous. The legal and organisational differences, however, allow for boundaries between the Corporate Research Provider and the University to be policed so that Academic Researchers are unable to spring leaks in the ships of enterprise.

Ultimately, the synergies and divergences between Corporate Research and Academic Research rest in the kind of knowledge they are concerned with and the forms in which that knowledge is produced. An examination of the typical form in which Corporate Research appears in outputs, and of the manner in and extent to which such research calls upon Academic

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Research, can hone our understanding of the how the two kinds of research work together. Such an examination would clarify how Academic Research already works and could work further with Corporate Research to maximise the entrepreneurial interests of the University and Ministry – including for literary research.

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## 20. Corporate Research and Academic Research

### *Alexander Search*

Corporate Research outputs are usually owned and, more importantly, controlled by those who commission the research, such as the University or Ministry, and to some extent by the Corporate Research Provider as producer. Academic Research is usually made available in the public domain to be capitalised by any party or to generate benefits for all, though sometimes the University or Ministry seek to control those parts of it which may be commercially exploited.

Corporate Research outputs are usually directed towards the interests of the commissioning party, so directed towards corporation- or market-specific purposes. The typical direction of investigation is from general and broad-ranging precepts or inferences to specific context and relevance: e.g. to work out how a specific corporation should locate itself apropos of others or in a policy context, or how a specific product can reach the largest market. Academic Research is generally addressed to the broadest public interest, so reaches towards general and wide-ranging formulation. This is undertaken, where relevant, by inference or extrapolation from a range of context-specific evidence: e.g. examining sectors of production and consumption in a broad way, or the dynamics of an existing social or natural condition, or the economic and ethical implications of policies and ideologies.

Corporate Research is designed to answer specific questions set by the commissioning party. Typically, Corporate Research is limited by the research questions that it is set to answer. Posing research questions is central to determining the limits for and the structure of Corporate Research, which concludes when informed recommendations for and resolutions of the questions can be offered. Academic Research is largely self-determining, addressing issues which are of scholarly moment at a given point of knowledge development or perceivably of wide public interest and import. The parameters are generally set by Academic Researchers themselves, and predetermined research questions are not considered as setting limits to investigation or even calling for necessary resolutions and recommendations. So, research questions that Academic

Research begin with may lead to others and then yet others, and end with observations which answer some but leave other questions open. The overall thrust of Academic Research is usually of exploring an issue or theme rather than answering questions posed to begin with (questions have a methodological rather than limiting and structuring function).

There are numerous moves in both Corporate and Academic Research which disturb the neatness of the above generalised differentiations between the two. For instance, the commissioning party (University or Ministry) or the Corporate Research Provider may put the commissioned Corporate Research output in the public domain – in the way Academic Research outputs are. That does not necessarily mean that in this instance the difference between Corporate Research and Academic Research has been erased. If a commissioned Corporate Research output is put in the public domain that is because it serves the interests of the commissioning party to do so. It may have an overt or covert advocacy agenda. If the commissioning party is the University or Ministry, then that research output in the public domain usually serves the entrepreneurial interests of academic leaders in the University or bureaucrats in the Ministry who did the commissioning. They may even have put it as a parameter in their agreement with the Corporate Research Provider that the Corporate Research output in question should do so – for instance, should be designed to manage public attitudes regarding a management strategy. Information disclosure laws may play a complex part here. If the Corporate Research Provider puts a Corporate Research output in the public domain of its own accord, that too serves the entrepreneurial interests of the Corporate Research Provider, while collecting brownie points for generating benefits in the spirit of Academic Research. At the least, that works as publicity and demonstration of the Corporate Research Provider's capabilities and encourages commissions.

The main point of these observations is that *Corporate Research needs Academic Research that is easily accessible in the public domain, and Academic Research can make good use of Corporate Research insofar as that can be accessed*. To answer research questions relevant to a specific organisation or product/service, the Corporate Researcher needs some direction in terms of general and broad-based precepts and evidence which Academic Research offers – even if the latter are seemingly not to entrepreneurial ends. Similarly, Corporate Research outputs can provide narrowly grounded evidence and observations from which Academic Research could make broader inferences and formulations – and those too may seemingly not be to entrepreneurial ends. But those can feed back into further Corporate Research.

One way of grasping the necessity of Academic Research for Corporate Research is to consider where the former may feature in a Corporate Research output.

A typical Corporate Research output in text form is a Corporate Research Report. The production of this usually fulfils the commission, though some Corporate Research Providers may continue to be involved in the implementation of recommendations. While there is naturally considerable diversity in the Corporate Research Report, it does have an essential form which those who deal with such reports recognise. The Corporate Research Report generally follows a kind of template from which departures generate diversity, and the underpinning stability of which allows for transparent and consensual reading strategies between those who commission and those who fulfil commissions. The essential form of the Corporate Research Report consists in the following typical parts, wherein Academic Research outputs may feature as follows.

- *Research questions:* These are set by the commissioning party, but they are usually fine-tuned or broken down in consultation with the Corporate Researcher. In such consultations the Corporate Researcher naturally has in mind readily available resources and formulations which will enable the questions to be answered efficiently. The Corporate Researcher might have in mind existing Corporate Research outputs which could be brought to bear on this commission. Equally, the Corporate Researcher will also have in mind existing general formulations and broad expectations which allow the research questions to be designed and understood in consensual ways (because those are evidenced, because those are acknowledged by experts, etc.). The latter is very largely premised on the Corporate Researcher's acquaintance with existing Academic Research, sometimes in areas which may not be seen to immediately bear upon the commission.
- *Describing the general context:* If the research questions are grounded in a large policy or market or cultural or otherwise structured environment – are borne upon by regulatory, ethical, linguistic, judicial, financial regimes – then that environment or the relevant regime needs to be described in a way that clarifies its bearing on the research questions for the purposes of the commissioning party. This would entail analysing a great deal of existing data, documentation, case-studies and so on. Usually, Corporate Researchers depend on Academic Research to have already undertaken such analysis and to have made broad or general inferences, from which the Corporate Researcher can extract what is needed.

- *Investigating the specific context:* If the research questions are focused on a specific corporation or product/service (often directly within or immediately outside the reach of the commissioning party itself) then that needs to be investigated and analysed by the Corporate Researcher. This is where direct research methods are employed by the Corporate Researcher, e.g. existing corporation-specific data analysis, generating data by undertaking scoping exercises and pilots, using structured interviews, questionnaire surveys, focus groups, observation and profiling sessions, etc. The robustness of each of these methods needs to be agreed and accepted by the commissioning party and the Corporate Researcher. At every step the robustness of such methods are first tested in Academic Research and then applied in Corporate Research (sometimes in formulaic ways).
- *Comparative analysis of alternative ways of answering the research questions:* From all the above, it is likely that the Corporate Researcher may come up with several contrary ways of answering the questions for the commissioning party to can act upon. At this point the Corporate Researcher needs to identify the pros and cons of each potential way relative to others. In doing this the Corporate Researcher may refer to analogous existing Corporate Research or to matters of principle and experience documented in Academic Research.
- *Recommendations:* From the comparative analysis the Corporate Researcher generally chooses one pathway which seems to be most effectively and productively actionable for the commissioning party. The justifications for doing so would have appeared principally in the comparative analysis, but may be further undergirded by reference to (citations from) authoritative Academic Research.
- *The executive summary:* The entirety of the Corporate Research Report is condensed so that the research process, analysis and recommendations appear as a coherent and easily comprehended whole. Generally, at this point use of or reference to Academic Research is unnecessary. At this point, the secure production-ownership of the report by the Corporate Research Provider is announced and the secure utility-ownership of the commissioning party is established. In terms of text placement, such ownership is usually announced and established at the beginning of the finished Corporate Research Report. The executive function of the summary is effectively a declaration of the hand-over from the Corporate Research Provider to the executives of the commissioning party – such as, academic leaders of the University or bureaucratic leaders of the Ministry.

Thus, the necessity for Academic Research in Corporate Research is usually embedded in every step of the typical form of the Corporate Research Report, except in the executive summary.

Evidently then, Academic Research already and continuously supports the entrepreneurial interests of the Corporate Research Provider, and thereby the entrepreneurial interests of corporations of all sorts, including the University and the Ministry. But, of course, that support can be variously enhanced. Both the existing support and the means for enhancing support emanate from every area and discipline of Academic Research and are engrained in the existing scholarly practices of all areas and disciplines.

I will try to exemplify this with regard to the specific area that this debate is particularly interested in: literary research, produced by professors in the University. This is often considered to be the most remote from Corporate Research, including by literary researchers and the University and Ministry themselves (by their leaders). The discussion that follows would consider the role played in the above processes by even such conventional scholarly practices as close reading, literary interpretation, and literary evaluation.

## 21. Privatisation Notes

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

We are dealing here with the process of privatising the public University, its transformation from an institution that should follow the disinterested pursuit of knowledge to one that must generate profits, regardless of how these are distributed. The culminating point of this process is the research carried out within those giant firms we call multinational corporations, which lack transparency and are not accountable to anybody, at least in their scientific policies if not in their results. Monsanto could be an example, and, interestingly enough, the dangers of this utter privatisation of knowledge and research has been functioning as one of the main plot motivations for science fiction. So, from one point of view, our whole discussion is already misplaced, because the University has been supplanted by companies as the place where knowledge is produced. But, looking at things more closely, it is possible to argue that the University cannot be simply done with, that for scientific breakthroughs to happen public money has to be invested in basic and long-term research. Private capital cannot venture to spend huge amounts of money in uncertain projects or projects whose returns lie too far ahead. Without NASA, there would be no serious space research. The fact that the University is at the same time dispensable and indispensable shows how we are in a cross-roads situation.

The level of abstraction that Alexander is using in these observations on Corporate and Academic Research, speaking of the University as a whole and from above, is one at which government policies are most directly discernible and thus most visible in the public arena. Here then, we are entering the field of broader politics. It would be interesting to see how this bears specifically upon literary research, for I suppose that the privatisation and commodification of knowledge does not leave too much space for literature. In a fully entrepreneurial University there is no way literary studies could compete with, say, TV series studies, which could be articulated with the making of such series themselves or at least with their marketing departments.

Alexander's observations on Corporate and Academic Research seem to me well reasoned out. But if their logic is close to flawless, this is



because their premises are problematic. Several ideas mentioned are assumptions that in differing degrees have gained currency in the ongoing debate on the role and mission of the University. Take, for instance, the notion that University institutions should be competing among themselves. This can only make sense if they are conceived as companies; from the inherent logic of research, it is counterproductive. That is not to mention the nice contradiction in entrepreneurial University institutions between an obsession with rankings and drives for collaboration. When given free play, competition knows no boundaries and one can easily imagine it taking hold of disputes among now opposing areas, departments, and professors in the same unit. Naturally, competition will also spill over into the student body, rendering academic life pretty much unbearable. The same holds for merchandise strategies, investment consulting, etc. In sum, like the morbid swelling of University management, the issues addressed by Corporate Research are themselves ills of a corporate world.

Needless to say, the more corporate the world becomes, the more Corporate Research will find room to act. It would not be hard to imagine a situation in which private firms are brought to collaborate with professors in fields in which the University acknowledges its weakness. The limit of such dynamics would be a hollowing out of the faculty, with a minimum number of appointed professors and a multitude of private contractors. On second thoughts, that is what is already happening now with the decrease of tenured positions and the soaring number of adjunct instructors.

Ultimately, neoliberal praise of private research as inherently beneficial normally fails to acknowledge that large-scale, risky endeavours are as a rule carried out by the government. The private sector does not dispose of the funds, nor is it capable of assuming the risks of research that, precisely because it may fail, can also open new horizons. In this sense, Academic Research is primary and Corporate Research secondary.

## 22. Which History?

*Suman Gupta*

In a way, Alexander's observations on Corporate Research Providers and the University are turning our understanding of the institutional and professional practice of research on its head.

By beginning with a quotation from Derrida's essay on the conflict of faculties (in II.18, "Away From the Monopolistic University"), Alexander reminds us that our sense of research is firmly embedded in a historicist perspective of the University. That is what Derrida drew upon (and we normally draw upon): looking to the history of the University to delineate the present condition of the University – and so for the pursuit of research therein. Then Alexander makes an interesting move; he puts this glimpse of the history of the University firmly aside and focuses instead on a kind of research that happens outside the University and yet bears upon it, informs its functioning and life, as it were. And he calls it Corporate Research, separating it from the Academic Research which still happens mainly in the University. In Alexander's account, the Corporate Research Provider has no history and Corporate Research no historical development, these just synchronously *are*: they are set firmly in an institutional apparatus and textual form and entrepreneurial purpose that seemingly have no past worth evoking. Then Alexander makes a further interesting move: he approaches Academic Research *through* Corporate Research, *as if* they have a mutually describable relation. Or even, *as if* Academic Research should be understood in a conditional and similarly synchronous way *after* Corporate Research. In that move the history of the University and of research therein is wiped away, and with it our received notion of how to understand the institutional and professional practice of research. The University and the Corporate Research Provider are placed on a level playing field – an entrepreneurial arena unencumbered by history – and Corporate and Academic Research are complementarily and collaboratively pursued for the pure future of enterprise.

How then can we engage with these moves given that we are suddenly being obliged to look at our universe from a lopsided perspective? Our historicist perspective of research in the University and Alexander's ahistoricist focus on transactions between Academic Research and

Corporate Research (the University and the Corporate Research Provider) apparently have no meeting point, ever moving away along different axes.

We could engage with Alexander's perspective uncompromisingly; engagement does not necessarily involve compromising. We could extend our historicist perspective to demonstrate where this ahistorical perspective is glossing over questionable ideological subscriptions, blurring social implications and inequities, shrouding 'long-term' management strategies, managing ethical qualms. The longer view of history clarifies the present in a way that purposive synchronic rationalisations cannot; causes and consequences become apparent and are evidenced in historicising, often at odds with synchronic rationalisation. The historicist critique of ahistorical entrepreneurial reasoning is well-traversed ground. If Alexander's kind of reasoning is now critically appraised as neoliberal in character, the critical verve in recognising neoliberalism – in naming 'neoliberalism' itself – has much to do with uncompromising historicisation of entrepreneurial politics, practices, calculations and language, from Foucault's (2008 [2004]) 1978 lectures and onwards (a constant attack of historical tracings). And that has often come with direct interrogation of the ahistoricism of neoliberal academia, or that part of academia which both constructs and serves neoliberalism without using the term 'neoliberal.' The term 'neoliberal' is always already recruited by critical historians or intellectuals informed of history, who doubt the claims they identify as 'neoliberal' – confer on what is named 'neoliberal' an expansive and coherent agenda, confirmed by a historicist perspective, which cannot but be condemned and opposed. I am reminded particularly of Philip Mirowski's (2013) observations on 'the exile of history and philosophy from any place within the contemporary academic economic orthodoxy' (165-6) after the 1970s – a prevailing orthodoxy because such economics serves the dominance of neoliberalism or serves to make neoliberalism dominant. Mirowski's own reading of neoliberalism, an uncompromisingly bitter one, starts with the wry observation that a 'certain modicum of intellectual history is indispensable' (37) and continues throughout in a historicist vein.

We could, then, engage with Alexander's account of Corporate Research and the Corporate Research Provider by going against its synchronous grain, by historicising them as the University and research therein are inevitably historicised in our minds. Perhaps we could start with monastic orders and trade guilds making transactions of knowledge for patronage, protection or pecuniary advantages ... investing in the establishment of University institutions and the equivalent in different periods of Corporate Research Provider firms ... drawing a continuous historical trace from there towards, eventually, the current neoliberal knowledge system. I have not come across such a historical account yet.

However, I suspect that such an account would necessarily draw attention to some fissures in the conventions of historical accounting, and those would also need to be addressed simultaneously. History in principle addresses a continuum that is as complex as life, and the practice of historical research involves measures to deal with and focus the excess of what is addressed as historical. In saying this I am treading gingerly on the slippery ground of theories of history and historiography. That ground largely involves mediations between 'history as something' (history as philology, science, philosophy, sociology, etc.) and 'history of something' (history of nation-states, peoples, periods, ideas, commodities, continents, world ... history of science, philosophy, economics, politics, etc. ... history of whatever) and 'some kind of history' (political history, economic history, cultural history, etc.). The practice of historical research, however, continues through all these interstices and continues irrespective of irresolution in theory. It continues by making pragmatic choices of what to focus on and where to draw the boundary of evidence – at some geopolitical limit, according to some specified period, certain ranges of material, etc. Pragmatic delimitations can become conventional, so that, say, the early-modern cultural history of England becomes a conventionalised area-of-research which does not need to constantly justify its delimited boundaries. However, pragmatic delimitations, especially where conventionalised, often turn out to be neither as pragmatic and nor as strengthened by convention as they might seem. A great deal of historicising has been devoted to questioning the implicit ideological implications of setting limits. Historians have often treated pragmatic limits as a kind of political unconscious or political mendacity, and redrawn the boundaries of historical research practice. Thus: working-class history, history from below, subaltern history, postcolonial history, women's history, environmental history and so on.

These obviously sketchy observations are offered merely to draw attention to some gaps in our historicist understanding when we turn critically upon Alexander's kind of synchronous and ahistorical reasoning. Critical engagement with that ahistoricism entails critical engagement with the gaps in our historicism. It calls for analysis of the political unconscious (or mendacity) that underpins those gaps. Thus, to launch my historicist critique of the ahistorical entrepreneurial rationale I try to locate myself, as a literary researcher, amidst the existing histories I am aware of or should inform myself of. I think of relevant political, cultural and economic histories (within some boundary I am familiar with, say British or European); the history of the University; the history of an academic discipline (within some boundary I can focus on, say the institutional history of English literature); the kind of history that bears obviously upon my research experience (say, English literary history). The first of those bears

upon all the others to some degree, but in irregular ways; the history of the University impinges on the institutional history of English literature to some degree (to a remarkably limited degree); neither the history of the University nor the institutional history of English literature seem to feature particularly in what is considered English literary history at present.

For my critique of the ahistoricist entrepreneurial rationale, which history provides a sound grounding? I can make some pragmatic choices. Are those pragmatic choices not led by ideological advocacy or expressive of a political unconscious, just as Alexander's ahistoricist rationale is? Is my historicist rationale then stronger or weaker than Alexander's ahistoricist rationale?

For the last question: I am convinced it is stronger.

## 23. Neoliberal Temporality

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

The claim that neoliberal thinking is incompatible with historical thinking, with the becoming of things, seems to me to be structural. If things can change then there is room for imagining better conditions, which is exactly what neoliberalism has to block. Alexander's is a peculiar position, for he wants to argue that a profit-motivated society is good for everyone (anyone who is not a boss will quickly smell diddling here), while most neoliberal measures, like austerity ones, can only be justified through the 'there is no other way' argument. Neoliberal temporality is thus a curious one, for if it represses the past, it incessantly appeals to the future: 'policies are tough now, but this is to get rid of anomalies and to put the economy in order; after this is carried out, prosperity will come to all.' The curious logical knot is that, once prosperity has not come and misery just increased, neoliberals blame the remnants of that which has not been neoliberalised for the systemic failure more ferociously than before. An interesting thought experiment would be this: suppose that a given people realised how this failed logic has worked and sought to finally prove the neoliberals wrong. Such people would let the latter adapt the economy totally to neoliberal principles, deregulating up to the last crumb of social life. Then, after just a couple of decades, one perceives the aberration the world has become, where a handful of people are incredibly rich, while 99% of the population are utterly impoverished. As one perceives that, one turns to the Neoliberal and says, 'See, weren't we right from the beginning; your theory doesn't work.' He replies, 'But that's how things are. Nobody believes in prosperity for all, your near-slavery is the natural state of things and there is nothing that you can do about it.'

Concerning the University as a result of a historical process, I like to think of the *emergence of the possibility* in considering certain ideas, however unrealised they may seem, as historically decisive. The University as a really free and autonomous realm may never have existed, but the possibility of imagining it was only available at certain junctures: it emerged at a particular historical point, and it may very well be in the process of disappearing. As long as one can have this representation, it can still work as a normative horizon. In sum, I take ideas to be, not fanciful or

whimsical entities that might as well be forgotten, but things that exist and could be actualised.

### *Alexander Search*

I think the jury is still out on some of the points you are making about the harm done by entrepreneurialism (what you call ‘neoliberalism,’ as if it were an expletive). Your main concern is about growing inequality, the growing concentration of wealth at the top and uneven distribution. Thomas Piketty’s (2013) synthesis of a wide range of data, across both time and space, appears to support this. While inequality in itself might cause resentment and disaffection, that does not necessarily mean that liberal capitalism has not pushed economies for the greater good. The point to focus on is the bottom line. Putting aside impoverishment generated by violent conflict, natural disasters and authoritarian miscalculations, the question is: is the poorest stratum in a liberal capitalist context now as poor as the poorest stratum, say, at the beginning or middle of the twentieth century? If average indicators of basic protections and securities were considered, have those improved over those periods? In most instances where liberal capitalism has had more or less regulated play, the answers favour entrepreneurial systems in a stable political order. Many who would be offended if labelled neoliberals, like neo-Keynesian Paul Krugman, have often pointed this out.

## 24. The Entrepreneurial Literary Researcher

### *Alexander Search*

Literature makes money. This is demonstrated in various Corporate Research Reports in the UK. Creative Blueprint's *The Literature Blueprint* (2010) has been much cited in this regard, trademarked by the organisation Creative & Cultural Skills, which has various licenses from different bits of the UK Ministry and agreements with businesses to do good for skills development and creative industries. This and other such evidence of how literature makes money (and how much money) is usefully outlined by Rick Rylance in *Literature and the Public Good* (2016: 90-105). Rylance should know because he is an academic leader and literature professor, with much experience of being boss of some bits of the UK Ministry's research funding agencies (see IV.2, "The Invisible Literary Researcher," for some observations on Rylance's book).

The literary researcher who works for the public good by generating benefits and, relatedly, profits naturally needs to contribute to the various corporations and initiatives through which literature makes money. These corporations and initiatives work in sectors which are well known (detailed in the above-mentioned texts), largely captured under the umbrella term 'creative industries.' Those include, obviously, literary publishing (fiction etc., *not* scholarly publishing, to which III below is devoted), heritage and tourism (e.g. museums, festivals), media and performance (e.g. theatre, audio-visual renderings), advertising and public relations. Apart from the 'cultural industries,' there are corporate bodies in the education and skills-training industry, a sector unto itself serving numerous other sectors – big business in which literature plays a significant and varied part.

But how should the entrepreneurial literary researcher contribute to these?

It might appear that the entrepreneurial literary researcher should direct what she does by way of Academic Research more obviously towards supporting Corporate Research. Perhaps she should even emulate the forms and discourses of Corporate Research, gradually nudging scholarly journal papers and research monographs towards the form of the Corporate Research Report. This has evidently proved an enticing idea, and a kind of seepage of entrepreneurial discourses, styles, and forms in



even scholarly literary monographs and papers is now frequently found. However, conversely, a conventional literary resistance to talking about money in anything other than denunciatory or ironic tones is still not uncommon. Rylance (2013) speaks of this attitude too, and argues that it is perfectly okay for *litterateurs* to be both opposed to entrepreneurialism and to be entrepreneurial at the same time – both serve the public good together, analogous to the inextricable relationship between benefits and profits.

However, if nudging Academic Research towards supporting Corporate Research were to portend the gradual dilution and eventual disappearance of Academic Research, that would definitely not do. Corporate Research would then suffer in the long run. As shown in II.20, “Corporate Research and Academic Research,” in various ways Corporate Research draws upon and depends on Academic Research. For Corporate Research to flourish and stoke profit making on behalf of Corporate Research Providers and the corporations which commission them, Academic Research needs to proliferate. It is necessary for a constant flow of Academic Research to be cheaply if not entirely freely – and preferably freely – available so as to maximise the profits from Corporate Research. And it needs to be stringently *academic*, narrowly consumed within scholarly circles even if freely available, so that the Corporate Research Provider’s mediations from Academic Research to Corporate Research stays necessary, sustainable and authoritative. Corporate Research Providers do not want Academic Researchers to produce Corporate Research outputs *in* the University. If they wanted some Academic Researcher to do that they could directly contract their services for a while themselves (as a consultant, as an advisor, etc.). Corporate Research and Academic Research should maintain their identities as such, while drawing upon each other for generating profits (more for the former) and benefits (more by the latter).

What goes for the Academic Researcher in general goes for the literary researcher specifically with regard to, for instance, the sectors of cultural industries and education/skills-training industries mentioned above.

The best way for Corporate Researchers and Academic Researchers to work is cooperatively or collaboratively without losing their identities and the specific characteristics of their distinct kinds of research. Luckily academic leaders in the University and bureaucrats in the Ministry know this well, and have set up numerous mechanisms to enable business-academic partnerships (such as, under the rubric of ‘knowledge transfer’ or ‘knowledge exchange’ collaborations). These are largely operationalised through funding regimes for research. The argument here is a straightforward one: Corporate Research draws upon Academic Research to provide secure and independent, corporation- or sector-specific, easily consumable

knowledge for profit making; Academic Research feeds Corporate Research by producing easily accessed, broad based, but specialist (difficult) knowledge which is expected to generate benefits. One of the benefits that the latter generates is for the former's profit. What is really necessary is a mechanism for smooth and informed and effective translation of Academic Research into Corporate Research. That is best achieved by arranging functional collaborations between Corporate and Academic Researchers. Such collaborations are best conceived as temporary, so that Corporate and Academic Researchers do not lose their identities and can revert to their normal research practices once the translational function is served.

Thus, the scholarly practices and conventions of Academic Research need to be maintained to enable the maximisation of Corporate Research. Insofar as that applies to literary research, practices and conventions which seem most resolutely remote from entrepreneurial considerations – from the thrust of Corporate Research – are, in fact, admirably useful for the kind of collaboration and translation outlined here. These literary scholarly practices and conventions help maintain the integrity of Academic Researchers, while remaining open to collaboration with the Corporate Researchers who are commissioned, particularly, by corporations in the above-named sectors.

## 25. Literary Close Reading

### *Alexander Search*

One of the defining features of a *literary* researcher is conviction in the practice of close reading. This conviction is variously useful in collaborations between literary researchers and Corporate Researchers working for corporations which make profits from literature, such as the ‘creative industries’ named above. Close reading is far from being the only conviction that defines the literary researcher as such, but it is a useful point to begin from before addressing other such convictions.

There is something mystical and ahistorical about literary close reading. Close reading could be thought of as a method, a sort of preparatory step towards interpretation or interpretive analysis, and yet it is difficult to define. Loosely, it consists in unhurried and attentive reading, noting the relationship between expression and content, identifying received and unorthodox features (linguistic or textual), clarifying the relationship of each part of the text to other parts and to the whole text. Close reading does not necessarily yield an interpretation in itself but disposes the text towards being interpreted. It involves drawing upon precepts of stylistics and form and context so that a cohesive interpretation of the text, and often some sort of normative assessment, becomes possible. And yet, as a method the parameters of close reading are somewhat fluid. It is difficult to be prescriptive about how detailed the process of close reading should be, and precisely what precepts should be brought to bear. Moreover, it is not expected that close reading will lead to definitive or final interpretations; rather, it is largely accepted that each close reading and re-reading could yield different interpretations or modify the existing, and thus there is no final close reading or final interpretation for any text. The horizon of an exhaustive close reading was suggested between Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss’s detailed analysis of Baudelaire’s “Les Chats”, 1962 (in Jakobson 1987), and Michael Riffaterre’s (1966) idea of a ‘super-reader’ in response, and in a limited way appears in computer-generated text-corpus analysis of a given oeuvre – but literary scholars tend to be sceptical of these.

Close reading, then, does not lend itself to being conveyed as a textbook method, as consisting in applying well-defined tools or engaging

with clearly prescribed processes. Close reading works as *practice* and is conveyed in *practice*. That is, close reading is inculcated by demonstration and exemplification, and is recognised in and tested through the *doing* of close reading. Instead of a methodological bridge that is crossed at some point of being trained in literary studies, it works as an initiation process which brings a student into literary studies and then continues to be exercised (reconfirmed) through the literary researcher's and teacher's career. To announce one's credentials as professing literature is to claim that one is able to *do* close reading and has *done* close reading of texts. It is regarded as so obvious a grounding for literary scholarship that it scarcely needs to be mentioned; anyone who professes literature as her scholarly discipline must already have close reading at her fingertips. Any scholarship of literature that is utterly divorced from close reading is considered not quite literary (perhaps in the area of 'sociology of literature' or 'history of literature' or something tangential like that).

Occasionally, close reading has been conceived as having a purpose that is larger than simply understanding a given text or set of texts thoroughly, and even, at times, larger than strictly *literary* scholarship itself. In philological text analysis, for instance, particularly close attention to the grammatical nuances of language usage in relation to the ideational content of texts was expected to give insights into the essence of specific cultures (national or linguistic cultures) and culture in general (Suman discusses this in Gupta 2015). Structuralist and post-structuralist theorists have undertaken close reading to either demonstrate how fundamental semiological principles function or to demonstrate the fluid construct- edness (often ideologically laden) of social texts and discourses – including the literary, whether approached in formalist or historicist terms (see Lentricchia and Dubois eds. 2003). In more down-to-earth ways, the notion that close reading of texts would reveal an underpinning or submerged reality of some sort has a strong purchase, such as, revealing something about the author's or reader's psyche, the *Zeitgeist* a text derived from and expressed, the complexity of life-worlds from which a text surfaces, the essential *textness* of texts, the pleasure of reading, the fine points of taste or judgement. However, by and large, none of these purposes are specifically needed to justify or validate the practice of literary close reading. At various points, those who are convinced of close reading have disavowed each of those larger purposes. Conviction in close reading is seemingly self-sustaining; it is inculcated and perpetuated through the doing of close reading and maintained by a preconceived demand for close reading among literary researchers.

Literary close reading is not really understood by differentiating it from other kinds of reading. There is no agreed answer to questions like: how close should close reading be?; is quick reading incompatible with close

reading?; can careful lay reading be close reading in a scholarly sense?; how should we differentiate between superficial and close reading?. These do not need agreed answers because the literary researcher already knows the answers. She can recognise close reading as such by being able to do it in practice.

Occasionally (still rarely), literary close reading has been questioned in terms of other kinds of reading. Concepts of ‘distant reading,’ ‘symptomatic reading,’ ‘surface reading,’ reading amidst the everyday or reading casually seem to head in that direction (see Moretti 2013; Middleton 2006; several essays in *Representations* 108:1, Fall 2009, especially by Best and Marcus 2009) – but without quite leaving close reading behind. Such questioning of close reading is from the position of being first immersed in the practice, and then building upon or painfully articulating doubts about owned conviction. The impetus for such questioning seems to be pushed by pressures that can barely be borne and yet must be engaged at some level. Those include the pressure of having to reckon with the global/world scope of literature, and so losing conviction in comfortable pigeon-holing according to language and nation; the pressure of a digital environment where texts are implicitly unstable, provisional, cross-connected, excessively produced (some e-literature authors deliberately put out multimodal literary texts which cannot be closely read because they change constantly).

Questioning of literary close reading thus, at best, considers the limits of close reading by positing its *opposite* (distant, superficial, surface, casual, lay reading). The opposite is conceived *from* the self-evident normativeness of close reading. A more heretical possibility, from a literary researcher’s perspective, has seldom been carefully considered: that literary close reading could be understood in terms of other kinds of close reading. Close reading is actually quite common amongst those who profess some discipline outside the literary, and, more widely, some area outside academia (as professionals). So, lawyers read law-books and their briefs very closely, weighing each word; political journalists read speeches and transcripts carefully, looking for what is between the lines; managers and bureaucrats are attentive to the minute implications of policy reports; publicists are careful to note the fine details of market profiles. It seems possible that the method and practice of close reading involved in the latter are substantially the same as those brought by literary researchers to texts.

Somewhat tentatively, it seems to me that there are two noteworthy differences between literary close reading and the other sorts of professional close reading mentioned above. First, by focusing on conviction in close reading as such, literary researchers render literary close reading opaque – a practice that draws attention to itself. Literary close reading thus seems relatively indifferent to a clearly articulated purpose or seems

able to accommodate a range of purposes according to pragmatics or taste. Other sorts of professional close reading do not dwell upon close reading in itself. Their close reading seems to be transparent, a practical pathway which is traversed in consensual steps or is routinized as the application of well-defined reading strategies. This kind of close reading then seems obviously purposive: for winning the legal case, or arousing the news-consuming public, or manoeuvring corporate interests. Second, literary close reading selects the kind of text it engages with, putatively because the chosen text displays certain qualities. Perhaps the literariness of the text invites the close reading of the literary researcher, or possibly the literary researcher's close reading brings out the literariness of the text – it is difficult to tell. Somewhere between the practice of close reading and the kind of text that is closely read the quality of literariness becomes manifest, always provisionally. Other professional close readers attend to whatever text can feed their extra-textual purpose, rather than select texts for their putatively ingrained qualities. The kind of texts they read is not described by textual features but by amenability to a professional purpose.

Conviction in literary close reading as described above then allows for a convergence of mutually confirmatory propositions which, to a significant extent, confirm the literariness of literary research and the profession of literary research. The literary researcher reads texts closely in a way that no lay reader does (lay readers read casually, superficially, in unanalytical ways, amidst everyday life). This particular and unusual practice of literary close reading confers a sort of professional (expert) authority and distinctiveness on literary researchers. The literary researcher's close attention to a text endows a quality of literariness on that text; at the same time, a text is closely read because it is seemingly already literary. The literary researcher's close reading is different from other kinds of professional close reading because it is a deliberate – deliberately opaque – practice, and its extra-textual purpose is indeterminate. The literary researcher is such because she is initiated into close reading through practice and is recognised as a practitioner of close reading by other practitioners. To achieve this status the literary researcher does not need recourse to rigorous definitions and methodological prescriptions. Close reading both draws upon analytical precepts and opens the way to interpretive analysis. However, the practice of close reading does not lead to any final or confirmed interpretation of a text or fulfil any consensually pre-agreed purpose.

This nexus of mutually confirmatory propositions, held together by conviction among literary researchers, is very useful from an entrepreneurial perspective.

## 26. Profitable Close Reading

### *Alexander Search*

Since literary close reading is grounded in practice, and conviction in close reading is maintained accordingly, the scholarly authority that is exercised by reading literary texts closely has a rather contained purchase. The purposes and benefits of close reading are not easily articulated for those who are not within literary studies. So, it might seem somewhat absurd to a Minister of Human Resources or to a plumber that a professor spent 30 years doing research on *Finnegans Wake*, though it seems reasonable enough to any Joycean researcher. This circumstance means that the scholarly authority obtained through literary close reading needs institutional or corporate backing to be publicly discernible, in the form of a University affiliation or a publication profile or media notice (preferably all of those together in mutually confirming ways). This is unlike the scholarly authority conferred by being adept in the well-defined methods of applied research (e.g. the methods for investigating Human Resourcing policies or water-works engineering technologies).

In collaborations between literary researchers and corporations profiting from literature (and their Corporate Researchers), the advantages of institutionally confirmed but somewhat opaque literary scholarly authority (say, based on close reading) is constantly found. It appears as expertise which is untrammelled by specific entrepreneurial interests because it works somewhat opaquely through practice. And yet it is believable scholarly authority because it is recognised by institutional status, confirmed in advance by the University, Ministry and corporations. Thus, there is a clear boundary drawn between Academic Research (disinterested) and Corporate Research (interested). At the same time, when needed the disinterested expertise arising from such Academic Research can be used to variously endorse, promote, and support entrepreneurial activities and marketable products as being beneficial for everyone. Corporate Research Providers can then give advice on which authorising literary researcher is best placed to do this and how. The University and Ministry can wholeheartedly support this circle for their own entrepreneurial interests.

At the most superficial level, this circle of enterprise, ultimately grounded in scholarly practices such as literary close reading, is found when

literary researchers make public appearances as ‘specialists’ or ‘leading authorities’ or ‘experts’ (which have a different ring from ‘scholars’ or ‘researchers’). Having spent 30 years closely reading *Finnegans Wake*, the Professor of Joyce Studies attached to some Prestigious University has a useful entrepreneurial function as a disinterested ‘leading authority.’ She can be called upon to assess new proposals and endorse new academic publications by scholarly publishers. Or, she could help prod readers’ interest in the latest edition of anything by Joyce, or anything canonically modernist put out by general-interest publishers. Some corporation offering a literary prize could justifiably put her on the jury. On Bloomsday a media firm may ask her to give an ‘expert’ comment for the latest news broadcast. She may also appear as a commentator for that corporation’s film productions. She could be put on a research funding body’s panel of experts. She may say a few words in the Irish Literature Festival, which cultured persons would pay to attend. She may even become the voice of literature itself or of culture itself – a celebrity intellectual – if she has good connections. Her Prestigious University will help her to cultivate those connections and entrepreneurial opportunities. The University will make sure she features on their ‘experts’ website so that Corporate Researchers of various sorts do not miss her when they need her.

None of this has a particularly direct relationship with the close readings of *Finnegans Wake* which established her scholarly authority. And yet they all do have something to do with that.

But, that is at a superficial level. In II.24, “The Entrepreneurial Literary Researcher,” I noted that Academic and Corporate Researchers work best in collaboration; and before that, in II.20, “Corporate Research and Academic Research,” I maintained that Corporate Research draws upon Academic Research in necessary and definite ways. These are not mutually exclusive kinds of research and nor can one replace the other, but they are still distinct. In II.25, “Literary Close Reading,” I also observed that literary close reading is not too different from other kinds of professional close reading (such as that done by lawyers, journalists, bureaucrats, etc.). The difference is mainly that the latter kind of close reading is obviously purposive (to win the case, to report effectively, to implement policy, etc.), whereas literary close reading is a comparatively opaque and self-sustaining practice. Put all that together and it is evident that collaboration between Corporate Researchers and Academic Researchers concerning literary enterprise could profitably be a matter of translating literary close reading towards the purposive ends of professional close reading. This kind of translating could mean extrapolating those insights of literary close reading which could be directed towards entrepreneurial ends. That also means neglecting those which cannot, but those might come in handy for some other enterprise. Collaboration could also involve crystallising rather than



selecting, obtaining a gist or thrust from literary close reading which could serve an entrepreneurial end. Whatever is muted in that process still carries the silent weight of scholarly authority within what is foregrounded, as 'confirmed by experts.'

For instance, consider a Corporate Research Provider that is often commissioned by various cultural tourism firms in Ireland. To facilitate addressing this kind of commission, the Corporate Research Provider may partner with an Academic Research Group in the Prestigious University, headed perhaps by a Professor of Joyce Studies who has a thorough understanding of *Finnegans Wake* – with a team of close readers of, say, works by W.B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett and other canonical authors. The Corporate Research Provider and the Academic Research Group of the Prestigious University can then apply for a publicly funded 'knowledge exchange' or 'academy-business partnership' or 'cultural enterprise' grant offered by the Ministry. On successfully receiving this grant, the collaboration could consist in the Corporate and Academic Researchers turning literary close readings of texts into site-maps of literary significance and heritage interest, and gauging typical or publicly resonant readings of Irish literary classics and evolving schemes for arousing public awareness of these texts. For the Academic Research Group of the Prestigious University this would lead to useful scholarly papers for the benefit of all, and also contribute to the 'expert' profiles of the Professor of Joyce Studies and her colleagues. For the Corporate Research Provider, those site-maps and readership data and public awareness schemes could be drawn upon to feed Corporate Research Reports. Most immediately, they could inform Corporate Research Reports for commissions from the usual cultural tourism firms. With some retargeting, that material could also inform Corporate Research Reports for commissioning parties like publishers seeking market profiles, municipal councils considering city regeneration plans, galleries and museums contemplating widening their operations, publicity departments looking for branding innovations and the like. The Corporate Research Provider may even use that research to fulfil a commission from the Prestigious University it partnered with for the above project. Perhaps the Prestigious University would consider opening an Irish Literary Heritage Institute (with the Professor of Joyce Studies as Director) and would need some Corporate Research done into its commercial potential.

At the base of this cycle lies that collaborative exercise mediating between literary close reading and professional close reading.

The synergies that exist between literary and professional close reading actually gesture towards a deeper level of intimacy between them. They gesture towards the most directly profitable (at least the most commercially exploitable) function of the University itself: teaching and learning, especially with employability and skills training in mind.

Close reading is a transferrable skill which can be used purposively in a large number of professional areas, but is not purposive in itself. It is one of the functions of Corporate Researchers to determine how precisely it could be made purposive for a particular venture or operation; and it is the one of the functions of literary scholars in the University to inculcate this skill in students through practice on literary texts. By focusing on literary texts, which are not evidently purposive in a professional sense, it is possible to inculcate the skill of close reading in terms of its general norms and principles. Once acquired through this practice, it becomes a skill that can be directed – through some additional sector-specific training – towards purposive employment in various corporations (towards employment for legal, administrative, publicity, etc. purposes). It is a key skill for a wide range of white-collar jobs, and the more the skill is mastered the more it enhances movement along career pathways. It lays the foundations of work for a wide swathe of the literate, technocratic and corporate political economy of the present.

I have noted Suman's and Fabio's occasional misgivings about my alleged ahistoricism above. Here is a point where the historical background to what I am talking about is germane. The history of literary scholarship and the practice of close reading are rooted throughout in the cultivation of skills for purposive ends. The pedagogic practice of close reading in literary studies now is akin to and derives from the study of rhetoric, oratory and composition through different historical stages of higher education. Rhetoric, or knowledge of the skills of persuasion, was from its inception a purposive matter. It was designed for skills training of the main influencers of different periods of history. I am reminded of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as a pioneering systematising of the field. Its organisation of the study of rhetoric into three sorts (political, forensic and ceremonial oratory, Book 1, 3) clearly served the purpose of skills training for politicians, lawyers and judges, and other professionals of the time. Incidentally, Aristotle was perfectly clear that profits are good and based on private wealth, which 'is "our own" ... in our power to dispose of it or keep it' – 'Doing good refers either to the preservation of life and the means of life, or to wealth, or to some other of the good things which are hard to get...' (Aristotle 2012, Book 1, 5:137). The use of Classical texts so that elite professionals-in-the-making could practice rhetoric, oratory and composition till the nineteenth century in Europe, and the gradual merging of those into modern literary studies and close reading to concordantly skills train increasingly literate populations amidst changing politico-economic arrangements worldwide, is intensively studied ground. This is especially cogently traced in histories of English literary study in the North American University, where foundational training in rhetoric, oratory and composition explicitly led into literary study and close reading

till very recently, and in some respects still does (e.g. Miller 2010, Winterowd 1998, Kitzhaber 1990, Berlin 1984). The current practice of close reading in literary pedagogy has the same skills-training function as rhetoric, oratory and composition had till the nineteenth century through the study of Classics – for the demography and politico-economic order of today.

But how does the close reading of literary *researchers* contribute to such skills training in University pedagogic programmes? How does research contribute to entrepreneurial pedagogy in the University? The literary researcher's job is to keep close reading constantly renewed, updated, and contextually relevant in ongoing practice. Thereby, pedagogic programmes for skills training in close reading can continue to be provided with renewed currency and authoritative scholarly backing. This sort of close reading has to be *in practice and about practice*, conveyed by being done, so that students and teachers of every generation would need to meet in the University – before those students proceed to becoming white-collar workers and perhaps future leaders. If the techniques and principles of this skill were articulated too clearly, were externalised in formulaic or prescriptive ways, then the commercial viability and efficacy of pedagogic literature programmes in the University would suffer. That would also make close reading itself less than it is and the skill itself would stultify quickly. Literary close reading works within the hands-on undertaking of research and pedagogy.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

When Alexander says: 'Other sorts of professional close reading do not dwell upon close reading in itself. Their close reading seems to be transparent, a practical pathway which is traversed in consensual steps or is routinized as the application of well-defined reading strategies' – he is absolutely right. Other professions use close reading as organically connected to *concrete arguments*. Reified literary close reading is a circular, tautological practice, because it is supported by the *value* of the text, which works as a ballast. Once it is agreed that a given literary artefact is worthy of reverence, any kind of coherence found in it adds to the multiplicity of the text (multiplicity itself has become a positive moral value). If the words used are abstract, that is because the poem is Platonic; if concrete, they express experience.

When Alexander says: 'The purposes and benefits of close reading are not easily articulated for those who are not within literary studies' – this seems to me to be a narrow, utilitarian view, for close reading may aim at disclosing potentialities that are present in language at large. After discovering them, the general reader may acquire a new awareness about

language's density and more-than-communicative character. Also, close reading, when not an end in itself, may be the means for acquiring knowledge that is interesting in a broad way. Roberto Schwarz's (2000 [1977] and 2000 [1990]) reading of Machado de Assis is all based on close readings, but it yields a deep sociological and anthropological knowledge of Brazil that can easily be extrapolated in the reader's experience.

When Alexander says that close reading 'works somewhat opaquely through practice' – he points to what is interesting about close reading, the fact that there is no given set of procedures that will necessarily prove to be successful. The choice of the detail to be highlighted must be the critic's responsibility, and a product of her imagination.

But what most interested me is an idea that is implicit in Alexander's argument: literature is only viable as an entrepreneurial object if it is supported by a positive representation of 'Culture.' All the examples Alexander offered about Joyce can only become believable if literature is considered Literature, if it is supposed that as a practice it is endowed with value – even if one does not specify what that value stands for. This seems to me to be a restrictive trait of literature as an object, that its sellable nature cannot appeal to any usefulness apart from this weak and problematic one.

## 27. Blue-Skies Research

### *Dismal Scientist*

I have been waiting patiently for Alexander to deal directly with the question of what entrepreneurial motivation is found in basic literary research, and he seems to be heading in that direction now. I am using ‘basic’ here in the sense in which the physical sciences use it when distinguishing between basic and applied research (broadly along the lines of I.11, “Disinterestedness and Academic Freedom” by Suman). This distinction currently has life primarily in the anguished observation that basic research is not receiving its rightful share of government research monies as profitable applications of science have more appeal to politicians and bureaucrats.

Basic researchers in the sciences rightly point out that applications are impossible without the fundamental knowledge generated by basic research and therefore a concern for applied research should logically come with respect for the utility of basic research. But this argument is fatally flawed. Entrepreneurial application of basic knowledge can only emerge after the basic knowledge is established, and so entrepreneurialism cannot motivate basic research. This is why the colloquial term for basic research is ‘blue-sky research.’ It has no earthly motivation. Its logical precedence to applied research implies it should be somehow resourced, but establishes no reason for any specific entrepreneurial agency (public or private) to supply its funding. For this reason, the strangled cries for more basic research funding draw universal approbation accompanied by very little additional funding.

In II.26 (“Profitable Close Reading”), Alexander initially argues that close reading can find entrepreneurial application, but as in the debate around basic science research, such arguments establish no reason why any specific (actual) entrepreneurial agent should support such blue-sky literary research.

Later in this piece, Alexander argues that the skills developed in blue-sky close reading are transferable to professional close reading and thus have professional application. This may be true, but does not establish the entrepreneurial case. One must establish that the learning of close reading for professional purposes is better taught with blue-sky objects for close

reading than with the more applied professional texts themselves. Further, one must establish that specifically new blue-sky close readings are necessary and that existing blue-sky close readings are not sufficient for this purpose if they exist.

In evoking classical education, Alexander argues that blue-sky close reading is the modern equivalent of rhetoric, which was regarded in its context as unarguably utilitarian in nature. Close reading is, however, more analytical than persuasive. It may be argued that blue-sky close reading cultivates cultural capital for an elite in the same way that rhetoric did in classical educational contexts. But the modern university is, with a few exceptions, addressing a mass market. Even existing elite institutions are coming to recognise that they cannot afford to continue to squander their reputational capital on such restricted elite markets.

As a real professional economist, I harbour an ideological commitment that it is best to supply all good things through the market. I recognise, however, that there are a few fields of human endeavour where this has not yet been definitively established. That is why I hold such high hopes for Alexander and correspondingly wish to hold him to such high standards.

### *Alexander Search*

I fear Dismal Scientist has taken the simplistic view that profits from basic research should be direct, should be realisable from its own commodity form. He is not to blame for this, of course, especially since he is a professional economist of integrity and does not want to see investment, production and returns in different account books – he understandably wants to see a calculable relationship between them. Academic and corporate leaders fortunately know the advantage of obscuring such relations by keeping separate account books, and have the bigger picture in view.

Otherwise, may I refer Dismal Scientist to II.20, “Corporate Research and Academic Research”? The dependence of Corporate Research on Academic Research is the point, even with regard to a single forcefully extrapolated strand of basic research such as literary close reading. The investment is made through the work of such basic research by the literary researcher; with some purposive redirecting and formalising, the profits therefrom accrue to the Corporate Research Provider. They also accrue to the University when sieved through entrepreneurial pedagogy. Further, the Corporate Research Provider’s direct advice and the University’s skills training feed almost the entire gamut of corporate enterprise, and thereby close reading bears in some measure on all account books showing profits. It is the indirectness of the investment through the literary researcher’s

basic research and the realisation of the profits for the Corporate Research Provider (giving consultancy direction) and the University (preparing a skilled workforce), and thereby further enabling profits for all corporations, which needs to be kept in sight. That thoroughly clarifies the entrepreneurial spirit that is found in basic research methods such as close reading.

I fear I must differ with Dismal Scientist about 'blue-skies research.' Unlike much basic research, where easy collaboration with and adaptation into Corporate Research is possible, what is thought of as blue-skies research is such that the pathways to collaboration with and adaptation into corporate research are not immediately clear. This naturally makes it difficult to justify any kind of funding for that. If funding is given, it is to encourage the blue-skies researcher to work towards clarifying how collaboration and adaptation can be achieved.

Literary close reading is but one instrument in the literary researcher's toolbox. There are others, and the related consideration of a few more of those would further sharpen the comprehensive interlocking of basic and applied research apropos of what the literary researcher does.

Finally, I am not sure that Dismal Scientist's distinction between the objectives of rhetoric and close reading – as, respectively, persuasion and analysis – quite holds. They are actually not as distinct as they may appear on the surface. Going back to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, almost the first point he made was that there is a prevailing misunderstanding that rhetoric is about affect, whereas really it is about Enthymemes (essentially the syllogism). Analysis and persuasion are a continuum. Admittedly, however, considering literary close reading in itself does not give the complete picture and the place of literary interpretation following close reading needs to be considered also from an entrepreneurial perspective.

### ***Dismal Scientist***

Alexander is right about my naive emphasis on proper accounts, though I am emphatically not an accountant.

For the sake of argument, I will accept Alexander's distinction between applied, basic and blue-sky research, with basic research occupying an intermediate position wherein the benefits of the basic research for applied purposes are more easily evident than in the case of blue-sky research, where they are not. Alexander has convincingly argued that benefits can accrue to the entrepreneur from applied research and from basic research once risk is factored in. Adam Smith would hasten to add that these benefits contribute to the total of beneficence in society irrespective of the entrepreneur's intentions. However, Alexander has only argued that blue-sky research could benefit the entrepreneur (and his

minion, the Corporate Researcher). But this benefit in the blue-sky case is uncertain (that is, cannot be accounted for through addition of a determinant risk factor), occasional and usually unpaid for.

The blue-sky literary researcher cannot be allowed to get away with arguing their research could benefit the entrepreneur, might benefit the entrepreneur and is, in any case, produced without direct payment. Such a foggy argument could be deployed to justify any but the most transparently useless activity. It is no wonder that this kind of literary researcher (are we talking about you, Suman and Fabio?) shies away from this kind of argument and seeks justification in an appeal to higher things.

I read Alexander's ultimate argument to contend that all literary research should be entrepreneurial. It is not enough that it be useful to an entrepreneur. It is not even decisive that it be entrepreneurially motivated. This is sufficient but not necessary. It is possible that non-entrepreneurially motivated research can be submitted to the discipline of the market by the University and the Ministry. When Alexander has established the propriety of this kind of discipline for allocating resources within the totality of the literary academic establishment for not only the applied and the basic researcher, but also the blue-sky researcher, his argument will have won home. He may also benefit the University and the Ministry by finally supplying an effective riposte to the blue-sky science apologists.



## 28. Purpose in Literary Interpretation

### *Alexander Search*

Literary close reading is a preparatory step towards interpretation or interpretive analysis and is understood through practice rather than formalised or prescriptive application (I had noted this in II.25, “Literary Close Reading”). In the main, literary interpretation of texts is also understood through practice or simply practiced by literary researchers, though, compared to close reading, there have been more sustained attempts to formalise principles and methods.

In fact, one of the reasons why close reading appears mystical (has been indifferently theorised) is because it leads more or less seamlessly into interpretation. Attempts at formalising principles and methods of literary research, of what is involved in textual analysis and what is literary about texts, have largely focused on interpretation as a process and outcome. It has been assumed that in the continuum of process and outcome, close reading features somewhere on the side of process (though fetishized as an authority-conferring act unto itself), and so it does not need to be pulled out and explained separately. At some point in processing the text and reaching an interpretation of it, close reading morphs into interpretation. However, it could equally be argued that any interpretive possibility presupposes the drift of close reading in the first place. It is unclear where close reading and interpretation merge or separate: it happens in practice, in the doing, and is held together meaningfully by the experience of doing, somewhat differently in each critical effort. If interpretation as process and outcome can be conceptually clarified, close reading would be covered somewhere in there.

However, just as literary close reading in itself presents difficulties for conceptual formalisation because it is grounded in practice, so too does literary interpretation and for the same reason. That sustained attempts have been made to elucidate its principles and methods does not mean that they are in fact elucidated in a consensual manner. The area remains a blur that works in practice. In a constantly slipping way, it is often averred that close reading has to do with the text itself (what can be delineated of or inferred from it) and interpretation relatedly brings something more than the text itself to understanding it (something like context, cognition,

conventions, culture, life experience and so on). This is a functional but also immediately shaky foundation to build upon – shaky because it could persuasively be argued that the ‘literary text itself’ or simply ‘text itself’ is an impossible idealisation, a kind of Platonic form that cannot be pinned down.

Attempts at the elucidation of literary interpretation from, so to speak, *within* literary research have usually sought delimiting conditions: i.e. conditions under which all literary researchers would be able to say, ‘this interpretive process and outcome is sound or unsound for such and such reasons’ (that is something like a working consensus). These could be thought of as boundary setting and validating exercises. Such attempts typically look to the history of literary interpretation, where it came from, and the degrees of consensus within which literary interpretation is practiced as a discipline, how it is done now. Such projects seem eminently doable but turn out to be less than satisfying when done. From, for instance, E.D. Hirsch’s *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) to, for instance, Umberto Eco’s *Limits of Interpretation* (1990) – a period of intensive thinking through of literary critical practice, of Literary Theory as an ascendant intellectual and institutional space – headway in conceptualising literary interpretation was limited. Each conceptual effort seemed to bring some clarity but always provisionally, so that it was never clear enough, and always in some respects muddier. In fact, both Hirsch and Eco struggled valiantly against their own sense of walking on very slippery ground. The boundary conditions they appointed or discovered so as to articulate literary interpretation (‘inner and outer horizons’ for Hirsch, ‘literal sense’ for Eco) seemed too minimal and yet not minimal enough to enable any kind of consensus. The nitty-gritty of what the literary interpreter does with the text, how it should be processed given those boundary conditions, was referred by both to historical extrapolations from scriptural hermeneutics and philosophical rationality. There was little there that was not laid out in great detail by those who did that extrapolating and updating earlier, from Friedrich Schleiermacher’s *Hermeneutics and Criticism* (1998 [1838]) to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* (1975 [1960]). What to do meaningfully and rigorously with texts could be matched to existing practices of literary interpretation, but that did not clarify why doing these constitute *literary* interpretation. Between Hirsch and Eco lay a spiralling anxiety about deconstructive analysis, which rendered notions of boundaries and validity themselves doubtful.

Attempts at the elucidation of literary interpretation appear more productive when not undertaken from *inside* literary research. That does not mean that productive attempts have been made from a disciplinary *outside*, such as in ethnographic or sociological research into literary interpretation, though there is much to be said for that. Rather, the idea is that

interpretation is best considered as a well-conceptualised general practice which applies to a wide range of – indeed all – knowledge pursuits, including the literary. If we can grasp what interpretation in this wider sense entails, we can then work out what literary interpretation specifically consists in. If we have a broad understanding of interpretation, then we can consider literary, sociological, philosophical, economic, scientific, etc. pursuits as parallel ways of engaging with interpretation. Given a broad concept of interpretation, considering these pursuits side by side clarifies each of their specific ways of interpreting by differentiation and linkage with each other.

Scholars who have approached the matter thus, with an eye on the literary, have offered useful guidance for literary researchers. With law, psychoanalysis and literature in mind, Patrick Cohn Hogan (2008) proposed that interpretation in a general way involves two parts: ‘the first concerns the object of interpretation – the meaning at which the interpretation aims. The second concerns the manner of interpretation – the method by which the interpretation might seek to attain its object. One concerns the *what* of interpretation; the other concerns the *how*’ (3). Hogan’s point is that interpretation, wherever undertaken, is purposive (has an objective) and the interpretive method is exercised in terms of the objective: the objective defines the kind of pursuit. Accordingly he understands legal, psychoanalytical and literary interpretation as following different objectives. This is obvious enough for the first two; Hogan’s answer to literary interpretation’s objective is really a cop out: ‘authorial aesthetic intent.’ But, that aside, Hogan’s understanding of interpretation in general is fairly convincing, and his way of trying to gauge it across several kinds of purpose may lead to better insights into literary interpretation. Thereby a more deliberative view of what the purpose of literary interpretation is might be obtained, given that interpretation is generally purposive.

In fact, a seeming consanguinity in legal and literary interpretation – exercised case-by-case or text-by-text, a core practice in both – has often interested scholars trying to get to the bottom of interpretation (e.g. Levinson and Mailloux eds. 1988, Posner 1989, Fish 1989, West 1993, Ward 1995, Dolin 2007, Gurnham 2009), all against a backdrop of general hermeneutics and liberal political philosophy. Much of this interest has been occupied by the overlaps: law-as-literature, law-in-literature, how literary theory can extend to the legal and *vice versa*. But all that is consistently based on a clear difference, which, when baldly stated, makes a succinct and notable point about literary interpretation. Here is Aharon Barak’s (2005) way of putting it – Posner stated it baldly too, but I prefer Barak’s phrasing:

No one claims that an interpretation given a literary text in the past is binding. In contrast, through the principle of *stare decisis* [doctrine of precedent] the past interpretation of a legal text is binding in the future. In law, we cannot accept interpretive theories that give a reader the freedom to understand the text according to his or her subjective perception. We cannot recognize the interpretive freedom of every judge. In order to maintain normal life in society, we must recognize binding interpretive rules and a normative hierarchy that orders them. (59)

Putting Hogan's general description of interpretation (and discounting his view of literary interpretive purpose) and Barak's way of differentiating legal and literary interpretation together, we can come up with a plausible proposition. Let us call this *Proposition 1: Literary interpretation is purposive but it is not purposive in a predefined way; the literary researcher can decide on the purpose according to her interests and commitments and then draw upon a varied toolbox of tested hermeneutic rules and methods to best lead towards fulfilling the chosen purpose for interpreting her chosen texts.* One of the achievements of the intellectual efforts and institutionalisation of Literary Theory in the 1970s and 1980s was a kind of formalisation of possible purposes of literary interpretation (a matter of delineating choices and naming them): Liberal Humanist, Marxist, Feminist, Modernist and Postmodernist, Postcolonial, New Historicist, Queer, Environmentalist, etc. (i.e. politically and socially purposed); New Critical/Formalist, Structuralist and Post-Structuralist and Deconstructionist, etc. (i.e. linguistically and philosophically purposed). Thereby literary interpretation still retained its fluidity of and in practice, and yet seemed to have some consensually ascribed and purposive pathways.

Proposition 1 is, nevertheless, too minimal a statement. What makes literary interpretation *literary* can be clarified further by comparing different pursuits of interpretation, but following a different tack. Consider, for instance, the kinds of choices for defining the purposes of literary interpretation that were more or less formalised in 1970s and 1980s Literary Theory. These largely refer to purposes espoused in *real-world* interpretation – by which, I mean, interpretation that is not focused on texts as the field or objects of engagement, but interpretation that bears (intends to bear) directly upon persons and collectives and social orders in relation to fields and objects. Texts may inevitably be implicated in real-world interpretation, but such interpretation does not focalise or fixate on texts. It is purposed for clarification and intervention beyond texts, registering and passing through texts instrumentally along the way. Real-world interpretation is purposed to bear upon the lives, experiences and interpersonal exchanges of persons; the functioning of society, however delineated; the organisation of material and immaterial transactions in large or small

groups of people; and so on. Each of the purposing choices for literary interpretation mentioned above is derived from areas of real-world interpretations and then brought to texts, effectively focalising texts. What particular purpose is chosen and what specific texts are chosen depend on the interests and commitments of the literary interpreter – the literary researcher.

Despite the emphasis on explicit conceptualisation and formalisation in Literary Theory, however, literary interpretation has continued to be grounded in practice, in the doing. Consequently the mechanics of literary interpretation continues to be obscure. Literary interpretation is simply recognised as being successfully or questionably done by the cognoscenti, rather than being gauged by well-articulated rules and methods, consensually accepted norms or principles. In fact, the rules and methods, norms and principles, relevant to literary interpretation are sometimes more clearly laid out by real-world researchers than literary researchers. This does not happen when real-world interpreters bring literature within their purview, as a discrete object or area of investigation, but when they refer to literature as woven into the real world they are investigating, enmeshed in real-world processes. The latter makes aspects of literary interpretation implicit in and coherent with real-world interpretive practice. Sociologists trying to conceptualise and explicitly formulate their real-world interpretive systems do this often: it appears in methodological accounts of, for instance, Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils's social action analysis, in Niklas Luhmann's general social systems theory, Erving Goffman's frame and performance analysis, Jürgen Habermas's rational communicative action theory, Henri Lefebvre's or Michel de Certeau's studies of everyday life. Each of those methodological accounts is underpinned to some degree by hermeneutic methods which bring texts within their real-world vision. There literary interpretation and sociological real-world interpretation blur into each other at a methodological level, and the purposes of interpretation for both kinds of pursuit become mutually informing. The same could be said of real-world interpretive methods formulated for politics, linguistics, psychology, jurisprudence, economics ... in fact, it is doubtful whether there are absolutely impervious boundaries between *any* area of real-world interpretation and literary interpretation.

These considerations lead to a second plausible proposition about literary interpretation, *Proposition 2: In choosing the purpose for her literary interpretations according to her interests and commitments, a literary researcher takes recourse to the repertoire of purposes found in various areas of real-world interpretations – and brings them to bear on her chosen texts, thus focalising the literary text. The hermeneutic tools then used by the literary researcher are often consonant with hermeneutic tools used in the real-world interpretations which enabled her chosen purposing of literary interpretation.*

Wound up within that proposition is a third which is worth stating separately. 'Literariness' is thus loosely defined in how the literary interpretation of chosen texts can be purposed in relation to some real-world area of interpretation. In other words, there is *Proposition 3: Literary interpretation assumes certain sorts of text-to-world and world-to-text relationships in its purposing (where 'world' is 'real world' in the sense used above). The literary researcher designates the texts she chooses to interpret thus as 'literary.'* There are several kinds of text-to-world and world-to-text relations that may be assumed in dubbing a text 'literary': that the text is constituted by the world (mimes it, reflects it, represents it, simulates it, etc.); that the text constitutes the world (that reality can be apprehended through texts, that the world imitates the text); that the text does world-building (reveals the building blocks of the real world, undertakes the contrastive building of unreal worlds); that the text is an instrument in the world which may be used to change it in some meaningful way. The point is that the text-to-world and the world-to-text relations direct the literary researcher's interpreting preponderantly to literary texts and only conditionally to the real world. The literary researcher chooses texts and considers those texts 'literary' accordingly. In that respect literary interpretation differs from attention to texts that may occur incidentally in real-world interpretations.

I have made, in Proposition 3, some glib argumentative leaps in suggesting several types of text-to-world and world-to-text relations. However, I do not need to illustrate them here: as experienced practitioners of literary interpretation, for instance, Fabio and Suman already know what is meant and could put numerous footnotes for each type.

The three plausible propositions give a sufficient account of literary interpretation, and its purposing practice, to consider how entrepreneurial considerations are either already embedded or should be inserted therein. As it happens, these entrepreneurial considerations are fairly close to those already described for close reading – only more integrated.

## 29. Professional Interpretation

### *Alexander Search*

Purposing texts for a given objective is a key skill for many white-collar professions, at various leadership and followership grades, outside academia. This is especially so for professions in entrepreneurial organisations engaging directly with consumers and the public, as well as professions involved in governance structures encouraging and supporting enterprise.

Most such professions deal with two kinds of texts with more or less emphasis on one or the other.

First, there are texts which are straightforwardly predisposed to serve the objectives of the profession. For instance, legal practitioners have law books, records of judicial proceedings, etc.; corporate publicity managers have guidebooks on branding, marketing, etc. alongside relevant information on products; political journalists have media style guides, ethics codes, reference books on politics and political history and so on; psychiatric counsellors have their therapy guidebooks, basic psychology textbooks, case reports, etc. We could think of such texts as *pre-purposed texts* – some set the ground rules of the profession and some inform professional practice.

Second, there are texts which may not seem to self-evidently bear upon professional practice, but which the professional can purpose for her objectives according to need or interest. It is not possible to characterise these texts as certain kinds of texts; *any* text may come to be purposed to a professional end if the professional can find a way to do so. This could be in cross-professional terms: e.g. a lawyer reading a pre-purposed political journalist's text, a psychiatric counsellor reading a pre-purposed publicity manager's text. Or, this could be done in terms of professionally purposing a not evidently pre-purposed text: e.g. lawyers, political journalists, publicity managers, psychiatric counsellors reading a fictional, historical, philosophical, geological, etc. text and finding it professionally useful in some way. We could think of these as *open-to-purpose texts*.

These purposings are all underpinned by a more fundamental kind of *textuality*. Something more than engaging with available *texts* in the conventional sense is involved here (as a scripted or multimodal artefact, i.e. artificially produced). Such purposings involve professionals appre-

hending and interpreting real-world situations *as if these were texts* – actual occurrences, performances, conversations, personalities, experiences, etc. are read as texts. All of these purposings involve interpretations in and as professional practice. According to the terminology of II.28, “Purpose in Literary interpretation,” the more fundamental kind of dealing with texts – which is actually textualising of the real-world – is the basis of *real-world interpretation*. In academic terms, real-world interpretation is the primary source of history, philosophy, linguistics, sociology, economics, etc. In terms of white-collar professional practice: first, real-world interpretation in an academic vein produces open-to-purpose texts; these open-to-purpose texts then variously inform (are extrapolated from to produce) the pre-purposed texts which professionals refer to constantly, which define the profession as such. In a circular chain, the pre-purposed texts thereafter determine the professional’s own real-world interpreting to serve immediate professional ends – as when a lawyer reads a specific brief, a psychiatric counsellor meets a patient, a journalist encounters an unfolding political event, a publicity manager is given an innovative new product to push, etc.

Text-to-world and world-to-text relations delineate the distinctive practice of *literary interpretation*, as argued in II.28, wherein textual qualities are foregrounded. In this sense, literary interpretation works amidst the interstices of all real-world interpretation, including the academic’s and the non-academic professional’s (of the sorts mentioned above). Apropos of the professional: since the text as artefact is foregrounded in literary interpretation, it is primarily on the professional’s engagement with open-to-purpose texts that literary interpretation has a bearing. That is, in this respect *literary interpretation has a bearing within professional practice of the sorts mentioned above, irrespective of how invested in the real-world and uninterested in literary matters the profession in question might seem*. Literary interpretation has a negligible contribution to the professional use of pre-purposed texts. But it is inevitably implicated in the professional’s use of open-to-purpose texts for professional objectives.

To fulfil her objectives, the professional’s real-world interpretations of specific circumstances – for a given case or event – involves, in the first instance, working out how the relevant pre-purposed texts inform them. This entails interpretation of pre-purposed texts so as to understand their import for the given case such that real-world interpretations follow which are to the immediate professional purpose. So, for instance, the lawyer interprets the real-world brief in terms of law books to be able to present arguments in court; the publicity manager interprets the specifications of a new product in terms of publicity strategy guidebooks to be able to market it. Though there is textual interpretation of the pre-purposed texts involved here, that seldom amounts to literary interpretation. Here, interpretive



methods are usually formalised in advance so that textual qualities only need to be registered in consensual and pre-agreed ways – to the extent that the specific case fits existing practice as laid out in the pre-purposed texts, or does not. The pre-purposed text is already purposed to be used thus: it is already disposed to be interpreted in professionally relevant ways.

More importantly here, the professional's real-world interpretations then often call upon or coalesce with purposing open-to-purpose texts to meet professional objectives. This is where the professional has to consider, however knowingly or unknowingly, the textual qualities of open-to-purpose texts and render them amenable to her purposing. Frequently, this happens in ways for which there is no formalised direction from pre-purposed texts. A publicity manager contemplating a marketing strategy for a new product might be inspired by lifestyle metaphors in a biography; a journalist may find a popular-science account on dark matter useful for grasping an unfolding political event, etc. – all such are uses of necessary interpretive skills for the dynamism and success of professional practice beyond the routinized. These are largely acts of literary interpretation by professionals which enhance their real-world interpretations. These involve deliberately purposing texts with attention to their text-to-world and world-to-text features according to the professional's own objectives and interests.

The easiest way for literary researchers to understand the professional purposing of open-to-purpose texts is by contemplating detective fiction. Detective fiction offers useful literary conceits for professional purposing of texts, involving the interplay of real-world and literary interpretation. From the inception of the genre, the plot purpose has been agreed in advance – to attribute culpability – and the protagonist whose task it is to fulfil that purpose by real-world interpretation is appointed accordingly – the investigator. Detective fiction constantly affirms the possibility of an investigator fulfilling the agreed purpose by real-world interpretation (that is, of course, the real world in fiction). The purpose is fulfilled when there is consensus on the attribution of culpability, both among the fictional protagonists and, in tandem, among readers of detective fiction. These are unwritten mutual agreements between detective fiction texts and their readers before the texts are read. The clarity of objective and outcome marks the role of the investigator as one of professional practice, or at least practice that can be professionalised. There has been some waffling about the status of 'amateur' and 'professional' detectives in fiction, but fictional investigators have usually been professionals from the beginnings of the genre in the sense of getting an income from their investigations – though not necessarily within a bureaucratic or corporate organisation.

The history of detective fiction has often been considered a history of the organisational professionalisation of investigators.

From the first glimmerings of the genre, the investigator's real-world purposive investigations have been routed through literary interpretations of a large variety of open-to-purpose texts. In Edgar Allen Poe's "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842), Auguste Dupin read a series of newspaper reports carefully, analysing their purposive appeals as news along the way, to solve the mystery of Marie's murder. In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866), Porfiry Petrovich found a clue to former law-student Raskolnikov's motive by reading (purposing) his academic paper "On Crime" as a psychological portrait. In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), Sergeant Cuff and Franklin Blake gradually aligned and fulfilled their objective by interpreting a series of conflicting witness statements, realigning their own narratives as they proceeded, to discover what happened when the jewel was stolen. Where real-world interpretation was most forensically penetrative of the real-world-as-text, as Sherlock Holmes's was (in Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, 1880-1914), the reader of detective fiction – who shares the investigator's purpose – finds herself facing the unreliability of the putative author of investigative reports, Dr. Watson.

But so much for literary conceits ... I am concerned with the real world here.

Purposing texts for a given objective is a key skill for many white-collar professions outside academia. Real-world and literary interpretation are variously interwoven in professional practice that calls upon pre-purposed and open-to-purpose texts. It is desirable that such professionals have a direct grasp of literary interpretation and suitable exposure to open-to-purpose texts. To be realistic though, it is unlikely that many professionals will have time to consider what literary interpretation entails or to read too many open-to-purpose texts – which may possibly but not necessarily be purposable. So, entrepreneurial corporations employing professionals might then take recourse to Corporate Researchers to do some of that purposing of texts on behalf of employees ... and then Corporate Researchers may call upon Academic Researchers for suggestions and directions ....

## 30. Interpretation and Object

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Alexander's observations on interpretation would probably be deemed sound by most literary researchers today. For what is entrepreneurial in these comments is almost invisible and enjoys great currency today, namely the absolute disregard for the nature of the object to be interpreted. By this I mean more than the truism that different compositions will require different interpretative tools; the point, rather, is that interpretation in a strong sense is justified by its object. The latter has to have something special about it, which interpretation brings to the fore, makes emerge, sometimes unexpectedly. Interpretation and object define themselves mutually as something exceptional. (This is the reason why it is legitimate to demand that critical essays be well written.) Words such as hermeneutics and exegesis originated in a religious context; their first horizon was the elucidation of the words of God. Something of it still lives in 'work,' an object with something in it, as opposed to 'text' as undifferentiated matter. The total dissociation between artefact to be read and reading instrument that is the presupposition of Alexander's argument reminds one of a conveyor belt. This throws a negative light on Theory, which now starts to resemble a machine, production for production's sake.

In this regard, the fact that close reading cannot be coded *a priori* is a positive observation. It is only one aspect of interpretation. Discussing it in abstract is only helpful in contexts where it is blatantly absent, e.g. in applications of theories that disregard the work's constitutive features.

*Alexander Search*

Fabio says: 'interpretation in a strong sense is justified by its object. The latter has to have something special about it, which interpretation brings to the fore, makes emerge, sometimes unexpectedly. Interpretation and object define themselves mutually as something exceptional.' I find this assertion intriguing, for it raises more questions than answers to my mind. Does this mean that some texts are more worth interpreting than others? By what criteria? Is it possible to have interpretation in the strong sense for something that seems unexceptional? Can interpretation make the

unexceptional exceptional and if so has the unexceptional then suddenly become transformed into exceptionality?

As before, I find the normative terms Fabio uses to be unclear: 'strong sense' by what measure?; 'exceptional' by what measure?; an object with what in it?

I can see that in a way this takes us back to arguments made in I.2, "Counterarguments," and I:3, "The Tricky Anteriority of Literature": the intrinsic value of certain literary works which justifies and substantiates interpretive attention. And as there, I see, Fabio presents this as an article of faith rather than by demonstration. He even says as much: it is a remnant of the devotional conviction which brought hermeneutics out of scriptural study. I do not understand or possess the devotional drive, and find myself unable to apprehend mystical assertions. If what Fabio says cannot be articulated as more than an article of faith it cannot really be debated – others can simply claim contrary articles of faith with similarly unelaborated firmness, and I can simply refuse it with similarly unelaborated firmness. But then literary research is no longer a matter of debates and arguments, it is simply a matter of claims that cannot be debated, each simply loudly announcing that she is holier than the other.

### *Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Here are some responses to Alexander's questions and observations:

1. 'Does this mean that some texts are more worth interpreting than others?': Yes. The lack of differentiation that Alexander defends makes it untenable to keep the word 'literature' for a distinctive kind of writing.
2. 'By what criteria?': None. Validity here comes *a posteriori*. No cultural object is independent of what is written about it.
3. 'Is it possible to have interpretation in the strong sense for something that seems unexceptional?': Yes, absolutely. But then that which was unexceptional ceases to be so. Roberto Schwarz's reading of José de Alencar's *Senhora* (in Schwarz 2000 [1977]) is a good example. As a rule, whenever a defining cause can be found for a given insufficiency, something which shows its *necessity*, bad turns into good (or at least into interesting).
4. 'The intrinsic value of certain literary works ... Fabio presents this as an article of faith': It is not a matter of faith at all. My mention of the theological origins of exegesis was meant to point to the history of the term, a history that may not have been fully overcome. I do not see at all why the acknowledgement that there is something not reducible to arguments

should hinder debating. Alexander's presupposition of total clarity – connected to the indistinct, homogenizing way he deals with objects – is incompatible with every single interesting kind of interpretation, be it Marxist, psychoanalytic, or postmodernist.

## 31. Profitable Literary Interpretation

### *Alexander Search*

In II.26, “Profitable Close Reading,” I had outlined two ways in which literary close reading is or could further be aligned with entrepreneurial agendas. These are: (1) *for the direct entrepreneurial purpose of the University* – through advanced teaching and learning, especially with employability and skills training of future professionals in mind; and (2) *for a wide range of entrepreneurial corporations* – through collaboration between Corporate and Academic Researchers, where, for our purposes, literary researchers and literature-related products are concerned.

Appropos of literary close reading in itself, the entrepreneurial uses are evident but a bit tangential. Pedagogic programmes in literature develop the useful skill of close reading through practice, but imaginative skills transfer is needed to bring close reading to professional enterprise. Similarly, Corporate-Academic Research collaboration underpinned by close reading is plausible, but calls for creative translation of expertise. However, for literary interpretation as outlined in II.28, “Purpose in Literary Interpretation,” and in II.29, “Professional Interpretation” – which includes close reading within its larger process – the bearing on professional entrepreneurial work is direct and straightforward. Let me consider this by turn for the two directions of entrepreneurial agendas mentioned above.

#### *(1) For the direct entrepreneurial purpose of the University:*

Numerous discipline-specific pedagogic programmes cultivate in students (future professionals) an information- and skills-base for using *pre-purposed texts* in specific sectors of employment. These skills are unarguably essential to keep entrepreneurial organisations functioning efficiently. Literary programmes are singularly useful for preparing students to purpose *open-to-purpose texts* according to their interests and needs, which is a key skill for employment in a wide range of sectors. This skill is essential for keeping entrepreneurial organisations dynamic and innovative: indeed, it is the key skill which may give some organisation an edge over others when needed. The practice of literary interpretation in the University pedagogic programme is not specific to professional sectors; it is a practice which

cuts across sectors and is transferable between sectors. It is learned in the doing, in application, with regard to texts which offer the most diverse range of text-to-world and world-to-text relations (i.e. literary texts). Because of the constant interpenetration of real-world interpretation and literary interpretation, that skill can be employed flexibly to numerous pragmatic aspects of enterprise. Learning the practice of literary interpretation does not give information on sector-specific purposes but gives an ability to interpretively purpose many kinds of texts for many sector-specific objectives. It grounds the ability to do purposing rather than simply meet a given purpose.

In preparing students as future professionals, University pedagogic programmes need to both inform students of pre-purposed texts for sector-specific employment and enable students to purpose open-to-purpose texts for whatever profession they might find employment in.

As for close reading, the teaching and learning of literary interpretation works primarily through doing, by application and practice, rather than through well-defined rules and prescriptions. So, literary researchers have a vital role in constantly validating and extending and updating the possibilities of literary interpretation. In this sense, pedagogic programmes for literary interpretation are symbiotically dependent on the continuous undertaking of literary interpretation by researchers.

In II.26, "Profitable Close Reading," I had argued that close reading is the current counterpart of the study of rhetoric and oratory in the past, similarly purposive for the politico-economic regime of its time. In a related way, it is arguable that the shift of emphasis from philology towards literary interpretation has occurred in the University through a necessary historical momentum. A considerable body of scholarship traces the historical passage from philological scholarship to modern literary research which centres interpretation (in this regard, for English Literary Studies in the USA see Graff 1987, in the UK see Palmer 1965, in both see Turner 2014 and Gupta 2015). To me these suggest that literary interpretation is implicitly to the purpose of modern and current economic orders, as philology had been for former economic orders. Literary interpretation is engrained in the emergence of modern entrepreneurial practices. That is arguably why the professionalisation of literary studies (as we understand it now, threaded around close reading and interpretation) took place in the University when it did, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is not the space to develop that argument; I leave it here as an open speculation.

(2) *For a wide range of entrepreneurial corporations:*

Literary researchers with a thorough grasp of purposing texts according to their interests and needs can collaborate with Corporate Researchers in

projects which do not necessarily have a literary or cultural dimension (such as those mentioned in II.26, “Profitable Close Reading”). They can usefully collaborate in any project involving purposing texts for consumers or the general public with an entrepreneurial objective.

By way of an illustration, consider a literary researcher who has worked extensively on critical interpretations of Joyce’s *Ulysses* in relation to branding and advertising practices. This has not only given her insights into *Ulysses*, but a wide ranging and complex grasp of branding practices, of a sort which more routinized marketing textbooks and training programmes are unlikely to convey. She has examined how literary modernism itself became a brand for a set of authors/artists/intellectuals between the wars (naturally Joyce in their midst) and how that has evolved since, in various contexts. She has detailed how authors and publishers pushed this brand and their own works for audiences at the time, and how they have been promoted as reading markets evolved. That *Ulysses* is particularly savvy about advertising cultures is of particular interest to her. She had conducted close readings of character portrayal amidst consumer culture: of Leopold Bloom’s sensibility as an advertisement canvasser; of how commercial products and logos feature in the construction of femininity and sexuality (Gerty McDowell in ‘Nausicaa,’ Molly Bloom in ‘Penelope’). The manner in which words and phrases become culturally resonant and are historically grounded (especially in the ‘Oxen of the Sun’ episode) has occupied her, with psychoanalytical, linguistic and sociological interpretive frames in mind. She has examined the purchase of neologisms and their suggestive strangeness vis-à-vis ordinary language usage (with the Revolution of the Word collocations in view, which appeared in *transition* as Joyce proceeded with *Work in Progress*). The relation of all these to evolving marketing practices and commodity culture in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has occupied our Joyce scholar for long. Little relating to *Ulysses* and its receptions with a bearing on marketing, advertising, branding has escaped her attention; her purposing of *Ulysses* is coeval with a wide-ranging and thought-through expertise in those commercial processes. In fact, in a general way, little has escaped the attention of Joyceans in this regard – though it has appeared in piecemeal ways and within a forbiddingly scholarly register. The relationship of modernism and marketing, naturally always featuring Joyce, has received sustained attention (Wicke 1988, Dettmar and Watt eds. 1996, Jensen 1996, Wexler 1997, Turner 2003, Mickalites 2012). In even greater detail, characterisation of commercial products and commodity culture in *Ulysses* and comparatively elsewhere, the roles of the author and publishers in promoting *Ulysses*, the textual play with language and stylistics informed of advertising and branding practices, etc. have been prolifically explored by literary researchers (to name a few: Moretti 1988, Ch.7; Herr 1986;



Leonard and Wicke eds. 1993; Leonard 1998; Patterson and Brown 2000; Petit 2010; Hye 2010; Loukopoulou 2013; Wicke 2012/2013; Nash ed. 2013, Part II; Hayward 2015).

This kind of expertise in purposing texts and analysing branding could extend to entrepreneurial projects beyond those directly involving literary and cultural products. It could usefully inform any kind of branding exercise. Perhaps more importantly, such expertise could assist organisations (corporations, University, Ministry) to embed a public brand consciousness in strategic (and, if necessary, tacit) context-specific ways for ranges of products and services. After all, the use of carefully purposed texts is seminal to cultivating both specific brands and general brand awareness. However, the Joycean brand expert may well not be aware of all the ways in which her expertise could be brought to well-defined entrepreneurial objectives. Therefore, her contribution to entrepreneurial projects has to be a collaborative one, in conversation with Corporate Researchers and also with other kinds of Academic Researchers with complementary expertise. Such collaboration involves joint delving into the interfaces between open-to-purpose and pre-purposed texts, drawing upon the literary researcher's grasp of the former and the Corporate Researcher's (and other Academic Researchers') of the latter. Thereby a broad range of entrepreneurial activity could be further facilitated, and an environment that is receptive to entrepreneurial activity could be further fostered.

## 32. Academic Responsibility and Profitable Convergence

### *Alexander Search*

Plausible as the above observations on the entrepreneurial potential of literary interpretation are, it must be admitted that to many literary researchers at present they sound fanciful if not objectionable. It is widely held that pedagogic programmes in the University are for a higher purpose. They should, it is felt, cultivate something larger than simply producing skilled employees for entrepreneurial organisations. They should enable students to become, it is expected, ‘critical thinkers’ or ‘active citizens’ or persons with ‘humane values’ (and, sometimes, ‘rational minds’). Being a skilled employee, it is maintained, is a kind of collateral advantage of this higher purpose. There are numerous accounts of what such higher purposes consist in, and they all foreground the generation of benefits for all – so that profits appear to be a secondary consideration, and sometimes an inconsiderable one. Similarly, literary researchers often consider their interpretations to have a similar higher and all-embracing beneficial purpose, and are apt to look down on cooperation with profit-making projects. To be asked to do so appears as a dumbing down or trivialisation of their in-depth knowledge.

Literary researchers are often hostile to notions of profit making and enterprise, to all matters financial; it is an attitude that is seemingly deeply embedded in their academic culture. Rick Rylance (2016) contemplates this at some length – though, oddly, he thinks of the attitude as being that of ‘literature’ itself rather than of literary scholars. Literary researchers correspondingly own to strong ethical investments in generating benefits for all, in a manner which is inimical to or indifferent to profit making. This misunderstanding of what the public good consists in (pure benefits without profits, see I.6, “Research for the Public Good”) could be variously explained. I will not dwell on explanations here, but, briefly, the following factors might have a role to play. (1) The attitude of indifference to profits and altruistic commitments could be a remnant of the elite class background of literary scholarship, initiated by persons who needed few other means than what was inherited or given as patronage. (2) The attitude might be an ideological residue from the historical phases through

which literary scholarship made its claims for public attention and authority, such as, via religious norms or socialist critiques of capitalism. (3) Disavowals of profit and strong ethical claims have served the entrepreneurial interests of academic scholars well at critical moments, especially in seeking the security of public funding to undergird their enterprise. (4) This attitude served the entrepreneurial strategies of corporations, University and Ministry well, in that they could use the apparently disinterested authority thereby garnered by researchers while co-opting their outputs to pragmatic profitable ends.

Be that as it may (each of those hypotheses could feed substantial research projects), the present situation calls for a different attitude from literary researchers. Privileges and ideologies of the past can be left where they belong. The intertwining of profit and benefit for the public good is the ruling ideology and order of the present (this bears upon how public funding works, see I.16, "Two Notes"). Most importantly, a growing intensification, diversification and scaling up of academic specialisations means that Corporate Researchers – and academic leaders of the University and bureaucrats of the Ministry – are increasingly unable to see clearly what can or should be co-opted. It is now incumbent on Academic Researchers to signal clearly what aspect of their work has entrepreneurial potential and thus actively support Corporate Researchers in their work, and thereby facilitate the profit making and benefit generation that corporations and the University and Ministry realise for the public good. It is, in brief, up to literary scholars to demonstrate unambiguously how their pedagogic programmes facilitate skills training and employment in enterprises. And it is up to literary researchers to undertake research which is explicitly oriented towards entrepreneurial use; to embed entrepreneurial innovations in their close readings and interpretations, and signal them for the advantage of Corporate Researchers.

This seems to suggest that at present a convergence between Academic Research and Corporate Research is desirable. This is true to some degree, and the academic attitude which resists any degree of convergence does need to be eschewed. At the same time though, for all the reasons outlined earlier (especially in II.20, "Corporate Research and Academic Research"), it is necessary to maintain an institutional and legal distinction between Academic Research and Corporate Research, between University and Corporate Research Provider. Thereby, crucially, lines of independence and ownership are kept clear. It is best if they continue to work in complementary ways and do not lose their identities. So a drift towards convergence between and yet a clarity of distinction between Corporate Research and Academic Research needs to be achieved – needs, really, to be managed. There should be some degree of mutually supportive convergence, but no merging. The onus is principally on Academic Researchers

to both enable convergence and yet keep their identity separate, but they cannot be depended upon to strike the right balance through their own diverse and dispersed initiatives.

Fortunately academic leaders of the University, bureaucrats of the Ministry, and executives of Corporate Research Providers have a sound grasp of this situation. Consequently, in the UK, for instance, a host of policy measures and strategies to engineer a balance of convergence and distinction have been implemented since the 1990s, collaboratively between University, Ministry and Corporate Research Providers. No doubt similar measures have been taken or are being unrolled in other countries too. These measures have been embraced and proactively implemented by forward-looking Academic Researchers. And even in quarters where a knee-jerk resistance to entrepreneurial calculations prevail – as amongst many literary researchers – there is evidence of a salutary change in mind set.

With regard to the two areas highlighted above, in II.31, “Profitable Literary Interpretation,” some of the relevant moves made by the University and Ministry in the UK since the 1990s include the following.

*For pedagogic programmes in the University:*

- Clearly stated aims and objectives are required for all modules and programmes, which must include ‘transferable skills’;
- Skills-development and employability are significant gauges in programme validation processes by appointed public or private bodies;
- Such validation criteria cover both content of programmes (curricula) and structural design of the student experience (pathways of study);
- Measurements of employment of students after graduation (by an ‘employability’ gauge) are factored into national and international rankings of programmes and universities;
- Periodically accounted public funding of universities take account of students’ experience in and employment after programmes;
- University governance structures at various levels routinely include employers (representatives of different sectors of employment) as stakeholders;
- Requirements to incorporate student-profile building during the programme so as to facilitate future employment are in place;
- Career advice services are available in University institutions and integrated with programmes;
- Financial incentives are available for programmes which can arrange work experience and internships outside academia for students;

- The inclusion (employment) of practitioners irrespective of academic qualifications to deliver pedagogic programmes is encouraged;
- Broadly articulated ‘employability’ agendas have been written into mission statements and periodic strategic plans of universities.

*For projects by Academic Researchers:*

- Requirements to articulate and measure the ‘impact’ of all publicly-funded research projects at point of funding and in post-project reporting are in place – typically, that involves accounting exercises with an eye on ‘costed’ investment and ‘costable’ returns, and gauging ‘value for money’;
- Periodic comparative grading of universities, and research units therein, in terms of research production and performance also take in measurements of ‘impact’ as above;
- Public funding schemes have been devised to facilitate broadly defined collaboration between Academic and Corporate Researchers (e.g., ‘knowledge transfer,’ ‘skills development,’ ‘public engagement’ schemes);
- Funding schemes have been devised to enable strategically focused and theme-centred collaboration between academic and non-academic organisations (popularly, under the rubric of ‘digital humanities,’ ‘innovation and creativity,’ ‘cultural industries,’ ‘leadership development,’ ‘citizenship and identity’ – to name a few which literary researchers might turn to);
- Accounting regimes have been instituted which reduce the autonomy of individual or groups of academic researchers and enable the University to maintain financial, and therefor administrative, control of projects (e.g. ‘full economic costing’ regimes);
- Arrangements for legally binding agreements to govern collaboration across University institutions are now routinized, which also enable suitable management of academic researchers;
- Similarly routinized now are legal contracts between University institutions and individual researchers to ensure that the brands of collaborating organisations are promoted, and any commercially exploitable outcome is protected from being capitalised by researchers;
- Academic researchers who comply with and contribute to such research management structures, and cultivate viable partnerships with entrepreneurial organisations, have preferment in promotions and rewards (in career terms).

These have all proved effective and necessary strategic measures.

Consequently, even literary researchers in the UK (and elsewhere, I am sure) have taken great strides over the last two decades in making their close readings and interpretations profitable – in becoming more avowedly entrepreneurial rather than tacitly or surreptitiously so.

### 33. Positive and Negative Notes

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

There are times when a literary studies scholar feels uncertain about her job and her role in society. ‘Why so much effort, so many hours devoted to an object that has no practical use?’ she asks herself. In such instances, thinking that there is something about literary studies that makes it desirable for various businesses is healthy. I remember receiving a letter from a Wall Street company sometime after finishing my PhD, enquiring if I would like to apply for a position there. They were looking for people with different ways of thinking to deal with the stock market. In principle, if not in fact, a deep knowledge of literature can be profitable for the whole of the culture industry. The historical depth, the variety of genres, the sheer intelligence present in so many works – they all help the reader to see through stereotypes and formulaic ways of organising narratives. All this is a result of literature’s disinterestedness, for it is only the lack of an immediate purpose that allows such a wide and heterogeneous group of texts to be assembled. The problem is that this use of literary knowledge is limited and indirect, as it were; once it is systematised, it contradicts itself by becoming instrumental. Moreover, the utility of literary researchers for the market is only significant for trendy niches, where more or less real novelty is tolerated. These are very restricted niches; for the greater part of the culture industry repetition of successful patterns is the rule. I just finished reading Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler’s *Composing for the Films* (1994 [1947]), and it was quite interesting to see how this problem played itself out there. Throughout the book the authors oscillate between a critical approach to film as the industry that it is and attempts to pragmatically improve the role of music in cinema (which includes suggestions and advice).

There is something interestingly positive about Alexander’s observations on profitable close reading and literary interpretation. The argument for the utility – and a highly productive one at that – of literary studies for the corporate world sounds an optimist note where these are underdeveloped, or simply left to slowly disintegrate through lack of funding. Or, for that matter, where possibilities are left unexplored through lack of imagination. I am contemplating the specificity of Alexander’s outlook in

comparison to the corporate philistinism that I am more accustomed to. Alexander's enlightened entrepreneurial stance could perhaps be viewed as sociologically abnormal. I can indeed imagine my colleagues copying and pasting Alexander's arguments, with a bad conscience, to be sure, as a desperate attempt to fight precarization and convince authorities not to extinguish their line of work. But the problem with Alexander's position is that it is too fanciful, for it fails to take into account market forces. Only a few top companies consider the ability 'to interpretively purpose many kinds of texts for many sector-specific objectives' an asset. Alexander overestimates the role of creativity and innovation in capitalism. Technological breakthroughs are most welcome, of course, but the costs of research are most eagerly shared with, if not appropriated from, the state – from public funding. As for the industry of culture, in sharp contrast with its self-representation, it is more static than dynamic, privileging old successful formulae so as to make investments safer. In sum, the space for convergence between business and literature is restricted to an elite rung of companies and professors. The same holds for purposing 'open-to-purpose texts for whatever profession they might find employment in': the potential for that is too limited to justify considerable investment.

As for the interpreter of Joyce, the process Alexander describes so well highlights the intrinsic tension between art and the market. If it is true that positing literature as a realm where the imagination reigns supreme can be criticised as idealist, the reduction of a literary work to strategies of symbolic capital accumulation à la Pierre Bourdieu (on this see II.39, "Modelling as Literary Research," below) in the end leads to an absurd scene: since there is no concrete oeuvre at stake, valorisation happens in a void and all the pomp and circumstance attached to art becomes ludicrous. The behaviour Alexander ascribes to the Joycean scholar is cynical because the neutrality it has to assume goes against the underlying impulse of a novel like *Ulysses*, which is one of freedom. *Ulysses* allows itself to be constituted by its own internal laws. Turning *Ulysses* into a brand is to commit violence against it. The researcher who is able to witness this process without regret must either be indifferent to or simply inimical to literature. She must have suffered a lot in going through all that learning about *Ulysses* so as to merely contribute to its instrumentalisation.

### *Alexander Search*

Insofar as the ability to interpretively purpose open-to-purpose texts goes, I think that is actually much sought after in corporate employment. It may be true that it is not necessarily sought after in itself, and that training in using pre-purposed texts is considered firmer qualification for more routinized work. But then these are not mutually exclusive abilities. In



most corporate sectors, employees now receive in-house training. The university education is a basic level upon which corporations construct their further human-resource training and development programmes suitable to their objectives. It is arguable that a grasp of interpretive purposing through university programmes promises ease of assimilation of pre-purposed texts too. It is useful for maximising the advantages of in-house training.

Also, though not all entrepreneurial sectors may seem immediately to be innovative, and may depend more on routinized work, it is also the case that almost all devote some resources to Corporate Research Providers to enable a supply of innovative applications. That is why I have stressed the importance of collaboration between Academic and Corporate Research. This is unlikely to change because, in a competitive capitalist environment, being able to differentiate products is critical to maintaining sustainable businesses and negotiating profit margins.

## 34. Skills and Knowledge

*Suman Gupta*

Alexander's thoughts about profitable close reading and interpretation make it clear that he is actually on the side of the angels who would save literary research – the humanities – from the onslaught of the entrepreneurial University and Ministry. It is widely anticipated that the humanities may be gradually pared down to nought if the current global neoliberal dispensation continues unabated. So, Alexander too is ultimately defending the humanities despite his dismissiveness about the liberal idealism of other such defenders (see I.14, “What Literary Researchers Actually Do”). Unlike those liberal utopians, and having no track with their bombast, Alexander does his defending by going temperately and optimistically along with the entrepreneurial leaders in the University and Ministry, by accepting their rationales and objectives. He argues that literary research does not need to be saved as a beneficial, even if uncertainly profitable, pursuit; it needs to be preserved because it is already profitable and could be made even more profitable – it can contribute to various kinds of enterprise, it could cooperate with Corporate Research skilled in producing objective-led strategies, it could educate skilled professionals for businesses. Literary research, he argues, stands firmly within the profitable agendas of ‘knowledge exchange’ and ‘skills transfer.’ And, in fact, despite rhetorical differences, many of the utopian liberal defenders of the humanities whom Alexander blithely dismissed are much like Alexander really.

But is Alexander's championing of literary research likely to persuade entrepreneurial leaders in the University and Ministry?

The general drift of Alexander's vision is of humanistic (literary) knowledge turning into skills which employable souls will bring to professions devoted to realising the purposes of entrepreneurial organisations. There is a no-nonsense, business-like worldliness about this. In fact, the distinction between knowledge and skills is blurred; there appear instead fluid transactions – knowledge *exchange* and skills *transfer* – within a knowledge-skills continuum. That blur is the province which the entrepreneurial University occupies as an institution now, having colonised the vocational institute, the mechanics' institute, the professional training

college, the polytechnic (or, maybe, the latter have colonised the former). Perhaps there is no significant difference between knowledge and skills? That is the ground on which Alexander's notion of entrepreneurial literary research is erected: the ground of a knowledge-skills continuum. A small pause on the distinction between knowledge and skills, if there is any, might be worthwhile. The erasure or lack of such a distinction might have some implications which we are missing here, which are possibly germane to Alexander's desire to persuade entrepreneurial leaders.

I find myself interested then in the connotations of 'skills': knowledge *of* skills by way of getting to grips with knowledge *and* skills. And three points cross my floundering mind, each attached, as is my wont, to consecutive historical junctures. I shall consider them by turn.

First: under pre-manufacturing conditions, perhaps skills is to knowledge as *techné* is to *epistémē* in classical Greek philosophy; the functional and practical on the one side and the systematically thought-through on the other. The interplay between them rather than a theory-practice binary may have left an imprint on the present-day presumption of a knowledge-skills continuum. The interplay in the Platonic version of *techné* and *epistémē* seems to me most to the point here. For instance, to put it briefly, Socrates argues in *The Republic* (Plato 1993, Waterfield translation) that just as the skills of farming, pottery, driving chariots, using weapons, etc. are cultivated as definite areas of expertise, when it comes to seeking the meaning of 'justice' or 'truth' that too involves a definite area, that of philosophical knowledge. By cultivating philosophical knowledge the philosopher could become expert in these ideas and thereby become skilled in governing. In making this argument, Socrates refers to the precedent authority and validity of skilled work to claim the same kind of legitimacy for the philosopher's knowledge; occasionally makes inferences from skilled work to derive persuasive philosophical principles; and then illustrates how the latter could inform the skilful practice of government. There is a toing and froing here, but the main point is that the usefulness of skills is self-evident and knowledge makes its usefulness evident by building upon and inferring from how skills work. This usefulness gives rise to the skill of government, but that does not involve the philosopher telling the farmer how to farm, the potter how to make pots, and so on.

Second: amidst systems of manufacture and mechanisation, skills are understood more in contradistinction to lack of skills than to knowledge. Skills seem to be somewhere between lack of skills (being unskilled) and having knowledge (being knowledgeable). Being skilled is clearly seen as superior to being unskilled and somewhat vaguely understood as being partially or functionally knowledgeable. Some of the complexities of this view can be contemplated by considering Adam Smith's characterisation

of 'skilled labour' in *Wealth of Nations* (1776 [1776]), with manufacture firmly in view and industrialisation within the perceptible prospect:

When any expensive machine is erected, the extraordinary work to be performed by it before it is worn out, it must be expected, will replace the capital laid out upon it, with at least the ordinary profits. A man educated at the expence of much labour and time to any of these employments which require extraordinary dexterity and skill, may be compared to one of those expensive machines. The work which he learns to perform, it must be expected, over and above the usual wages of common labour, will replace to him the whole expence of his education, with at least the ordinary profits of an equally visible capital. It must do this in a reasonable time, regard being had to the very uncertain duration of human life, in the same manner as to the more certain duration of the machine.

The difference between the wages of skilled labour and those of common labour, is founded upon this principle. (118-9)

Here, skills are exercised by persons who contribute passively to processes of production larger than themselves. Skills are mechanical functions within those processes. Smith's equation of skilled worker and expensive machine is noteworthy: the skilled worker does what a complex machine might, something mechanical (in action). And there is a threat there, and not an empty one: the skilled worker may be replaced by something mechanical (in fact), a machine, especially if it is less expensive than him. The larger process of production within which the skilled worker is inserted to do mechanical work – a process conceptualised as *anterior* to the skills needed for it to keep going – is where knowledge is located. This is the capitalist's knowledge when he works out what the skills are for. Alternatively, it is the machine-maker's knowledge, which can replace the worker with a relatively inexpensive machine. In the interim before that happens, the machine-maker's knowledge informs the worker to the extent of being a mechanical stop-gap (skills him, extrapolates and hands over the functional bits of his knowledge). The skilled worker's value can be understood only in terms of the unskilled worker's (the common labourer), as a kind of bottom line of production. The unskilled worker is on the lowest threshold of the capitalist's calculations, or is someone to whom the machine-maker's knowledge is of no relevance (perhaps already more dispensable than a machine).

Third: in industrial society, it occasionally seemed that there is more to skills than simply being a mechanical derivative of knowledge. Greater experience of industrial life and workers' movements suggested that there is. I am reminded of an anecdote by Raymond Williams (1970 [first published 1968]), in the midst of pondering the purposes of higher education, which, at that point, after fifteen years of teaching in adult education

and nine in the university, he felt well-placed to consider. He recalls meeting a miner as a tutor for a summer-school literature course on novels about working-class life, who suddenly observes: 'I can't explain to anybody what my work is' (Williams 1970: 214). Williams wonders whether this was said by way of questioning the authenticity of the novels he was teaching, but the miner says that his observation was not about them, it is he who is unable to explain. Williams probes, suggests that he does have a sense of what the miner does, the miner asks him to demonstrate by drawing it, Williams complies, the miner appears not dissatisfied with Williams' effort, and simply makes some corrections to the drawing. Williams feels, 'Some crucial point had been passed and the rest of the week went better' (215). No further explanation of this exchange is offered. However, clearly an understanding is established here between Williams's articulate knowledge and the miner's practice of skilled work. It is established that each has something to learn from the other, and on a level playing field – this is not a master-student relationship, or, if it is, that is as both being master and student to the other by turn. There is knowledge in the worker's acquired skills and skill in the tutor's thinking about working-class narratives.

But what of post-industrial society? In relation to skills and knowledge, it seems to me that the present social order involves the crystallisation of, so to speak, a third party to skills and knowledge. This third party is in fact involved in all the three historical junctures above, implicated in the three illustrations I have chosen to characterise those junctures. This third party develops gradually through those contexts, and acquires a ubiquitous integrity in our time. In each of those junctures, knowledge and skills work in a mutually regarding and intertwined manner; this third party appears sometimes as aligned to knowledge, sometimes as aligned to skills, and always as assuming a position of power with regard to both and, interestingly, indifferently to both. It grows into the ruling entrepreneurial leader in the University and Ministry of our time. So, let me revisit those three historical junctures by turn again to trace how this third party appears and develops.

First: a split appears between this third party and the philosopher in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias* (1994, Waterfield translation). The third party seems to have something to do with rhetoric, and, for Socrates and his interlocutors, Gorgias's rhetoric seems to have some apparent similarity to Socrates's philosophy. But there is a slippage between the common convictions (*doxa*) that rhetoricians build upon and the skilled practice – *technē* – that Socrates occasionally appeals to and reaches for: rhetoric may or may not be just, may or may not be productive as *technē* is, may simply consist in the exercise of power as a game and irrespective of effects. It is, however, not rhetoric in itself (the rhetorician *per se*) that is the third party

whom Socrates as philosopher has to engage; it is a particular bent of self-interested power. It appears embodied as Callicles in the third part of the *Gorgias* dialogue. Callicles knows his privileges and knows how to maintain them, and his engagement with Socrates is also active disengagement, imbued with a thorough-going cynicism. He goes along with Socrates's arguments at times, gives in to careful rationalisations, mocks him throughout, humours him occasionally (when his more engaged rhetorician companions plead with him), simply dismisses him at others. His contempt for Socrates's arguments, which seem to him the occupation of the unworldly waster, a youthful indulgence which sits ill on an old man, cannot be dented: the more passionate and earnest Socrates's arguments, the less Callicles hears them.

Second: the third party in relation to Adam Smith's characterisation of the skilled worker has a kind of conceptual heritage from and a less visible appearance than Callicles: it appears in the perspective, in the voice, with which Smith himself delineates the skilled worker. The third party is the person with capital who has to find a reasonable system for dispensing wages to maximise the profits from his productive enterprise. Above, I put this on the side of the precedent knowledge which instrumentalises (mechanises) the worker's skills, alongside the machine-maker's knowledge which may come to replace the skilled worker with a machine. But the capitalist's knowledge here (the principles of which are laid out in *Wealth of Nations*) is quite different from the machine-maker's, who has, really, only the merest presence in Smith's reckonings – whom I have discovered by implication rather than encountered clearly in the quotation. The machine-maker's knowledge is academic (scientific, technical), and it shares some common ground with the skilled worker's knowhow, even if it may take away the skilled worker's livelihood. Both the machine-maker and the skilled worker are engaged with the process of production and are invested in the product, with honing the process and realising the product. The capitalist who dispenses wages to the skilled worker and may invest in the machine-maker's projects is actually not interested in the process or product themselves, only in the profit margins that may be realised from them. To the capitalist's calculations it does not matter whether it is a skilled worker or a machine that does the work, and what the skills involved are and what the principles of the machine are. All he is interested in is using and controlling all those to the purpose of enhancing the profit margin in a sustainable manner. He does not need to hear either the skilled worker or the machine-maker, only use them both adroitly.

Third: Williams' anecdote appeared in an article, "The Teaching Relationship," first in *The Guardian* in 1968, and then in a 1970 volume (*Education for Democracy*, David Rubinstein and Colin Stoneman eds.) carrying articles concerned with – differing from – the Black Papers. The Black

Papers were a series of conservative critiques of progressive UK government education policies (conservative and progressive here do not translate straightforwardly into Tory and Labour party), in particular objecting to policies designed to democratise education and disperse its benefits more evenly. They argued that doing so will compromise 'quality.' These were published in the *Critical Quarterly* in 1969 in the first instance, organised by Brian Cox and A.E. Dyson, and Cox continued to publish further interventions till 1977. The conservative direction later merged with both Tory and Labour government education policies. Williams's article was not a direct response to the Black Papers, but nevertheless spoke trenchantly against their drift. That was precisely because of the kind of equalising exchange of knowledge-skills, the fluidity of the student-master relation, captured in that anecdote; and further, because of similarly equalising views on how curricula should be set and assessment conducted in the university. Williams notes various problems of 'internal control' which his views could encounter; that is, internal to the relations between students and teachers, internal to the academic body. However, in this perspective of higher education, the common ground between skilled worker and scholar, student and teacher, is centred. And from this perspective Williams is able to articulate the perspective of the third party that bears upon both as an extrinsic force:

The real difficulty comes when this process [of negotiations within the academic body] is short-cut by external administrative decision, as happened all too often in the bureaucratic structure of some modern adult education, and as happens very often in universities [...]. The toughest issue is not the complication of internal control, which with effort, patience and of course a necessary militancy of demand, can be got right. It is a very complicated question of social demand, and hence social control, of a public educational system. There have been some ugly attempts recently to exert repressive controls; and in any case the sophisticated financial management, by which control is really exerted in Britain, is now very dangerous to universities, as it was constantly dangerous in the more exposed and poorer conditions of adult education. (Williams 1970: 219)

The jump from there to the present condition of the University – the entrepreneurial University – is not too difficult to make. There is little that could be regarded as internal or external to the University now; there is instead the neuterness of the public good as a wedding of profits and benefits across all sectors, including the University. There is little to distinguish the public from the private educational system. No mutually-regarding negotiations between skills and knowledge are possible, because there is a skills-knowledge continuum with fuzzy boundaries. There is no worker in the picture, only students and employers. But most importantly,

there is the universalisation of that sophisticated financial management whereby control is really exerted, not as a complication or a difficulty but as the celebrated path of progress itself, enunciating the public good in its own terms. However, it bears upon the University without a specific interest in either knowledge or skills themselves, as the content of life, forged by and forging living processes and beings. It only registers those insofar as the outcome of profits and benefits for some putative public good can be put into account books. The third party does not stand on the side but reigns in the midst of knowledge and skills: with the attitude of Callicles, the rational capacity and limitation of Adam Smith's wage-giving capitalist, claiming the endorsement of a social demand and doing sophisticated financial management. I think of this third party, embodied in the academic leader of the entrepreneurial University and the bureaucrat in the education Ministry, as a neo-Callicles.

This neo-Callicles is short-sighted. He can see the usefulness of skills and can only hazily apprehend knowledge and is able to consider the relationship between them very dimly, if at all. So, he might try to get rid of knowledge and extrapolate skills, as if skills are free-floating faculties. In the process he may thereby stultify skills. That is, until the account books are out of kilter, when he will blindly restructure everything and wait for something to happen. The neo-Callicles does not really hear any kind of argument which looks more like knowledge (even if it bears upon skills) and less like purposive skills (even when knowledgeably presented) – neither from the skilled nor from the knowledgeable. He is accustomed to thinking that he knows better already and feels a kind of contempt about thought that is deeper than a puddle and does not serve entrepreneurial calculation.

I very much doubt whether even Alexander's obsequious appeal to the neo-Callicles on behalf of entrepreneurial literary studies can get through. It sounds much too neo-Socratic.



## 35. Targeted Cynicism and Parasitic Authority

*Suman Gupta*

There is a curious deafness that insulates Alexander's arguments throughout from being argued with. Since these arguments coincide with the dominant entrepreneurial order of the present – championed by leaders of corporations, the University, the Ministry – this deafness is more a larger establishment attitude than an individual quirk of Alexander's. If the literary researcher says, 'We do close reading principally to understand the relation of text and world for the benefit of all'; Alexander says, 'You may think so, but actually it is to serve profit-making interests in ways that you either don't realise or don't admit to.' If the professor says, 'Publicly funded research in the University is for generating benefits for all, and that shouldn't be distorted by profit making'; Alexander says, 'You may think so, but nevertheless what you do actually realises profits and that's a good thing – in fact, your conviction to the contrary may itself be useful for profit making.'

This kind of argument expresses no curiosity about the reasons that the literary researcher or the professor may offer, let alone engaging with them. Instead, the argument consists in systematically disbelieving and disregarding what the researcher or professor claims, based on the assumption of a higher or truer insight and purpose (knowing better). I think of this as *targeted cynicism*. It typically takes the form of performing attentiveness to claims from 'below' while tacitly discounting them in advance – sometimes designedly co-opting from what was claimed from 'below' so as to manoeuvre against it.

I use the term 'cynicism' advisedly. Several histories of its connotations from the Greek Cynics to the present (Cutler 2005, Mazella 2007) consider the powerful opprobrium that ordinarily attaches to the term now after starting as a normatively ambiguous and even positive philosophical attitude. Now 'cynicism' appears to describe a general attitude of disenchantment with a large sphere (humanity in general, claims of veracity, a political order, an organisation, etc.), usually entertained by eccentric individuals or a more or less dissenting or alienated group or mass (workers, employees, citizenry, etc.). Two turns in analyses of the current resonances of cynicism are especially worth pausing on here.

One has a particular relevance to academic researchers, including literary researchers: the universalisation of cynicism as a prevailing condition of society, in the midst of pervasive media and spin cultures. ‘Postmodern cynicism’ seemed to consist in interrogating concepts of authenticity in such comprehensive and sophisticated ways that it effectively rendered all political commitment and engagement ineffective. Put otherwise, the assumption of political ineffectiveness became the cynical precondition for cogently articulating the universal capture of postmodernism. As it turned out, the most searching critiques of such postmodern cynicism came in terms of progressive political commitment and as an assertion of academic self-reflexivity – most cogently in Peter Sloterdijk’s *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1983 [1987 in English]), castigating such ‘enlightened false consciousness,’ and followed up severally thereafter (e.g. Bewes 1997). Such a studied universalisation of cynicism is also the spur to rearticulating progressive political commitment within academia, a commitment to working against and yet through cynicism.

The other turn is in a smaller sphere: the corporate organisation. The understandable purpose of research on organisational cynicism has been to manage or deter its appearance amongst workers or employees so that the organisation remains productive. Here cynicism is considered, in keeping with its dominant normative connotations, as being unproductive or resistant to production or, worst, negating production. An unorthodox twist in this approach was offered in Ian Cutler’s influential article “The Cynical Manager” (2000). This tried to clarify the positive dimensions of cynicism by recovering some of its Classical philosophical thrust, and by, even more unusually, focusing on leaders rather than workers in corporate organisations. Cutler was modest about the prospects of the cynical manager though, but encouraging about the role this person could play as a middle-level leader:

He or she is a member of a universal community and is not concerned with narrow, ‘patriotic’ preoccupations. [...] The ‘cynical manager,’ in any case, regards most espoused knowledge as hearsay, being several times removed from the original source; and further, regards this knowledge as having been distorted and coded into models which have increasingly less relationship to any current reality.

However, because the ‘cynical manager,’ as with all other cynics, is still treated with some wariness, he or she will always play a ‘marginal’ role in any given community or organization. This does not mean, however, that the ‘cynical manager’ will have only marginal influence. Having the ability to remain clear minded and calm during times of chaos, maybe even *causing* chaos, the ‘cynical manager’ will ask embarrassing questions, engage others in debate, and speak the truth which nobody wants to hear. This role, an

adaptive and resourceful response to organizational repression and rigidity, has its effect in challenging the status quo [...]. (Cutler 2000: 309)

Cutler (2005) later found other positive roles for his version of cynicism, but this is the one of interest here. This characterisation of the cynical middle-level manager is a compromise position between leader and worker or employee, almost too bold already as a contribution to the journal *Management Learning*. It stops well short of considering the comprehensive *targeted cynicism* which makes upper-level managers upper-level. However, Cutler's description of the cynical middle-level manager's open-mindedness does point tacitly towards the closed-mindedness of the upper-level manager's targeted cynicism. Targeted cynicism is what the upper-level manager exercises exclusively towards workers and employees. This kind of cynicism is exercised from the vantage point of a completely uncynical faith in – a blinkered immersion in – the entrepreneurial purpose of the organisation. From that vantage point the upper-level manager finds it unnecessary to register arguments from 'below' which do not either already comply with his or which cannot be manoeuvred so as to be silenced. It is cynical about everything it perceives to be 'beneath' its self-appointed 'high' position.

By way of a quick demonstration of how targeted cynicism works from the leader's perspective, consider this bit of advice for corporate leaders on how to deal with cynicism among employees – cynicism that 'keep organizations from changing':

**Cynicism:** It is human nature to believe that planned change is doomed to failure, and we will naturally suspect anyone who is trying to change us [...]. Cynicism is a common concern of change agents. They feel that leading change leaves the initiator open to criticism. One must learn not to be afraid of criticism. Rejection is just a sign of resistance to change and has nothing to do with the value of the idea. The only way to effectively counter cynicism is to strengthen those who believe in the change. Spending time trying to change a crisis is not valuable. What is valuable is reinforcing your position and those who support it, by overwhelming the opposition with the facts about the change. Critics change their tune quickly when faced with serious and focused opposition. It is often good to approach critics in an open forum with the facts. It is harder for them to resist the change if they openly must explain their resistance. This method is good if the change can be shown as positive, but one must make sure to have all the details in order to avoid falling victim to the cynic. A good cynic will have good and often logical reasons for their resistance and if one is not able to counter their response, it is not a good idea to challenge them openly. Cynicism can spread quickly if a group does not see the individual benefit. (Curlee and Gordon 2011: 78)

The 'one' this quotation is companionably addressed to is the group manager or leader (in the corporation, University, Ministry). This leader knows in advance that his leaderly idea cannot be rejected from 'below' (by the group) because 'Rejection is just a sign of resistance to change and has nothing to do with the value of the idea.' It is a foregone conclusion that rejection cannot occur because the idea has no value – is stupid or ignorant, for instance. The rest follows: do not listen to critics; use the support of those who already agree with you; cynics in the group with logical arguments are best not engaged with; others in the group should be discouraged from hearing them. That is targeted cynicism from the leaderly perspective against the interrogative or alienated cynicism of workers and employees.

Alexander's mode of arguing has many features of such targeted cynicism. His arguments develop by appearing to hear but without quite hearing, or hearing only what can be turned against the speaker. It is the targeted cynicism of power.

Is there any research exploring the relationship of the targeted cynicism of leaders to the interrogative or alienated cynicism of workers? Perhaps the former causes the latter? If this targeted cynicism of leaders is not noticed by the latter it effectively does not exist.

This is where the situation in the entrepreneurial University and Ministry presents a conundrum. Researchers in the entrepreneurial University are sharp at spotting the workings of targeted cynicism because they have contemplated the postmodern universalisation of cynicism and are able to (self-reflexively) critique it – to recognise it and work against it through it. The targeted cynicism of power confronts the self-aware critique of postmodern cynicism in the entrepreneurial University, and it is inevitably an abrasive encounter.

Despite deploying such targeted cynicism within his own arguments, Alexander also sharpens the abrasiveness of that encounter. This is because Alexander is seemingly driven by a need to explain more than is necessary, without a discernible entrepreneurial purpose. It seems as if Alexander is laying out the entrepreneurial rationale with its habitual targeted cynicism for the sake of doing so – perhaps for the pleasure of unravelling its intricacies, a kind of intellectual game. This peculiar project clarifies the workings of the targeted cynicism of power in the University and Ministry here in a different way.

The necessary basis of the entrepreneurial leader's targeted cynicism is his absolute conviction in the profit-making rationale itself, the *raison d'être* of such leadership. The entrepreneurial authority conferred by this conviction works coercively; it works by not listening, by its presumption of being pre-validated. In Alexander's account, the manner in which such entrepreneurial authority works in the University – works with effect on

literary researchers particularly – is laid bare through the relationship between Academic Research and Corporate Research (from II.20 onwards). His explanation of how a seemingly unbusinesslike practice like literary close reading, which confers literary scholarly authority, can be mediated (extrapolated from, condensed into gists) by Corporate Researchers to enable profit making by corporate and University and Ministry leaders puts an unflattering perspective on the latter. Alexander is, in fact, a bit cynical about the kind of scholarly authority that the literary researcher acquires through close reading. His account of it in II.25, “Literary Close Reading,” has a sarcastic edge: such scholarly authority is built on a circular and fuzzy logic, he suggests. But it does have the weight of having *pursued and done something carefully and methodically*. In contrast, by Alexander’s account, the kind of processing the Corporate Researcher does to render scholarly outputs profitable – to actuate “Profitable Close Reading” in II.26 – is little more than a derivative exercise. It is moreover a derivative exercise which is indifferent to the integrity of what had been carefully and methodically done. The authority garnered through the derivation of Corporate Research from Academic Research and put at the service of entrepreneurial leaders in the University, Ministry, corporation is merely a kind of parasitic authority. It is based on bowdlerising the outputs of scholarly authority; that is, bowdlerising scholarly outputs so as to take credit for and profits from them.

No one knows this better than the researchers who do the research that is thus bowdlerised. They can be browbeaten or bought out to be subservient to the entrepreneurial authority exercised variously in the University, Ministry, corporations, but they cannot really take it seriously. They cannot but suspect that entrepreneurial authority is lodged vampire-like on the body of scholarly authority.

## 36. Literary and Commercial Value

### *Alexander Search*

A common preconception that many literary researchers share is that literary value is attributed in ways that are indifferent to commercial value. The process through which literary researchers understand the (literary) value of, for instance, Joyce's *Ulysses* as text is not affected by the process through which a publisher, book dealer, book buyer, collector puts a (monetary) value on the book *Ulysses*, or, for that matter, a heritage-tourism firm or a publicity agent may estimate the value of the brands 'Joyce' and '*Ulysses*.' The latter may factor in the former, but the former is indifferent to the latter.

Literary value suggests an estimation of the *significance* of the literary text *Ulysses*. That may be understood in terms of a general consensus among critics and discerning readers, the putatively intrinsic qualities of the text, or both. This significance can only be characterised in imprecise and relative normative terms (from a 'boring story' to a 'work of shattering genius'), which need to be constantly reconsidered through updated interpretations and analyses. Commercial value suggests a measurement of *Ulysses* as a marketable item (in a transferrable and exchangeable form, as a book or as a recognisable brand-device), determined by the costs of producing that item and/or the utility of that item. This measurement can be expressed in precise monetary terms for specific market conditions. With regard to the marketable item *Ulysses*, its commercial value may take account of the text *Ulysses*'s literary value insofar as the latter affects the marginal utility of the former. But that does not mean that commercial valuation pays attention to the mechanics of literary evaluation. The mechanics of literary evaluation has its contained circuit; the mechanics of commercial valuation merely takes account of a collateral effect of literary evaluation within its own contained circuit. The principles underpinning the processes of the two circuits are considered to be separate.

There are, of course, areas of literary research where this distinction may appear to be obscured. In practice, however, it is seldom wiped out. Under the framings of 'genre'/popular/commercial/mass-market fiction studies, or of popular/material/everyday culture studies, or of publishing studies, or book- and reading-history, literary researchers often investigate

the commercial aspects of literary works. On occasion, this has led into close readings and literary interpretations which seem to attribute literary value on the back of commercial value – or, rather, to conduct literary evaluation of texts because they have been extraordinarily commercially successful as books or brands. Thereby, literary critics may decide that an unusually commercially successful work is also significant in a literary sense, is worthy of being highly valued as literature. But, even then literary researchers are unlikely to assume that its commercial success and literary significance are coterminous, that the one is the same as the other. Rather, it is considered that such a text is commercially successful and *also* worthy literature (and possibly, commercially successful *despite* being worthy literature).

More often, when literary researchers analyse texts because of extraordinary commercial success, it is precisely the nature of commercial success rather than the literary qualities of the text that is in focus. Literary interpretation of the text is then purposed to throw light on the literary market and what clicks therein. Though the text is then estimated for its ability to tap into the market, its literary value might continue to seem doubtful or to be pegged as irrelevant for this purpose ('it is not great literature but...'). Researchers pursuing this line of research might then begin to feel sceptical about literary evaluation, its snobbish disregard for the market and the common reader and economic pragmatics, its elitist preciousness. Around the late 1980s in the UK and USA, when the turn towards institutionalised Theory led to the emergence of Cultural Studies out of Literary Studies, often carving out spaces from Literature Departments, thrusting cultural theorists denounced the elitism of 'literature' and called for new estimations of textual value (e.g. Bennett 1990, Easthope 1991, Smithson and Ruff eds. 1994, Cain ed. 1996). It seems that where commercial (more broadly, economic) valuations are factored into textual study, literary value is either put aside or declared defunct.

Most often, where commercial factors have not been factored into literary evaluations by researchers, they might come to feel that the work's commercial career should also be considered. That is unlikely to change the literary value attached to the work, but could be pursued to clarify historical contexts so as to somehow further underline the literary evaluation. This may be undertaken in a fact-finding spirit ('I can't think of anything interpretive to say about *Ulysses* which hasn't been said already, so let me look at its production and market history'), or in the spirit of exploring a curious phenomenon ('It is odd that a difficult text like *Ulysses* managed to not just find an immediate audience but has constantly stayed in print – let me explore how that happened'). Here research into the commercial value of a literary work is motivated by an estimation of literary value, as an afterthought, precisely because the two lines of value

are not expected to coincide. Nor, in such cases, is a straightforward relationship sought. Such research is generally premised on how two lines of valuation may have worked in detached and yet mutually regarding ways – at least, insofar as commercial value has factored literary value into the marginal utility of the marketable literary item.

So, there is literary value and there is commercial value – different gauges. Literary researchers may attend to both but are careful not to mix them up, to be clear about the separate mechanics of valuations involved, the separate principles at work. Outside academic spheres things may seem confused. A reader with little interest in measured evaluation but apt to make quick, subjective judgments may say, ‘*This Book* has sold so well because it is a literary work of staggering genius,’ and others – especially entrepreneurs – would happily agree. But the literary researcher would demur. And so would the informed publisher, reviewer, reader, etc. The two lines may also seem to blur into each other because the language of literary commerce and that of literary research sometimes overlap. But the rigorous literary researcher does not fall for that seeming common ground. In this regard, Suman has recently argued that the use of the word ‘genre’ in the commercial discourse of ‘genre fiction’ and in the scholarly discourse on ‘literary genres’ traces an institutional competition for the control of ‘literature’ (see Gupta 2016).

However, despite the powerful preconceptions and practices which ensure the separation of commercial and literary value, the connections between these kinds of valuation are increasingly of moment. There is a meaningful relationship. Even in their principles and dynamics, the two lines of valuation are more connected than the literary researcher usually suspects.



## 37. Measuring Values in the Cultural Industries

*Alexander Search*

The preconceived distance between literary and commercial value outlined above (in II.36) is, obviously, with regard to gauging literary works – as texts or as marketable items and brands. Here, instead of the term ‘commercial value,’ I will use the more inclusive ‘economic value.’ The term ‘commercial value’ simply stresses a particular purposing of ‘economic value,’ and otherwise has substantively the same meaning.

The preconception in question is held by literary researchers, who usually regard themselves as significant arbitrators of literary valuation. It is also held by other litterateurs who play key roles in determining literary value – by authors, performers, producers, reviewers, reporters and other such discerning readers. But the preconception is also largely accepted by those who regard themselves as arbitrators of the economic value of literary works: owners and share-holders, leaders or managers in an enormous range of entrepreneurial sectors within which literary works are implicated – across the so-called ‘cultural industries.’ That includes enterprises to do with media and entertainment, publishing and retailing, tourism and heritage, publicity and advertisement, education and training (including the University and Ministry). That is: those aspects of these enterprises which are, at any level, informed by or deal with what they consider to be literary texts and marketable items are generally operationalised after accepting the difference between economic and literary values. Moreover, other kinds of cultural work with similar valuation practices (aesthetic or artistic value, ethical value) also understand their economic valuations with analogous preconceptions. Incidentally, ‘cultural industries’ should not be conflated with Frankfurt School characterisations of the ‘culture industry’ – a popular but vague phrase, redolent with moralistic high sentence but a bit obtuse with regard to entrepreneurial rationales and economic precepts.

Unsurprisingly under these circumstances, little sustained investigation of the relationship between literary and economic values has been undertaken. Their separation has seemed too obvious to be reconsidered carefully, and has usually been reiterated in practice. That is another way

of saying that those who should be most interested in reconsidering this relationship – literary researchers – are usually ill-equipped to do so. Literary pedagogy, like scholarship, is premised on being indifferent to economic value. Literary researchers are often too innumerate or lacking in technical capability to explore the relationship. The few recent and sustained studies that explore the interfaces of literature and economics, usually take the separate valuations as a first principle. They tend to focus on questions of representation, the processing of literary production in economic terms, and generally within a demarcated historical context (e.g. Pfaff 1989, Watts 1990, Woodmansee and Osteen eds. 1999, Gagnier 2000, Lewis 2000, Clune 2010, Mack 2014, Hutter 2015). Fortunately, leaders in the University and bureaucrats in the Ministry have realised that it is necessary to reconsider such separated value systems. They have consequently devised strategies to encourage rethinking. Such strategies both encourage the development of entrepreneurial acumen (mainly through research funding and reviewing mechanisms) and foster greater numeracy and technological competence among researchers (beyond simply being software users, e.g. by focusing resources on ‘digital humanities’).

I turn, therefore, towards certain speculations for the further consideration of literary researchers, as their entrepreneurial acumen and technological capabilities are developed by the University and Ministry. As observed above (in II.36), the separate ways in which the literary value (of literary texts) and economic value (of marketable literary items and brands) are conceived is grounded in different modes of expressing valuation.

The *literary value* of a text is characterised in imprecise and relative normative terms (good/bad, complex/simple, original/clichéd, perceptive/shallow, captivating/dull, important/trivial, and so on), according to consensuses that emerge at different junctures of interpretive exchanges. These normative terms allow a notional gauging of the significance of literary texts. A necessary degree of subjectivity is accepted in such characterisation: i.e. it is understood that no declaration of literary value represents a firm consensus, but may represent a strongly argued or dominant view. It is always possible to disagree with or reconsider any literary valuation.

The *economic value* of literary items and brands is expressed in precise monetary terms in relation to specific market conditions, determined by the costs of producing that item and/or the utility of that item. Each element of the production costs is itself similarly calculated and expressed as economic values (of labour, material, infrastructure, etc.). The economic value of the literary item or brand therefore seems objective for the given market conditions, leaving little scope of disagreement.

The degree of subjectivity allowed in normatively expressing literary valuations admits the agency of the interpreter or reader in determining value (though often unwillingly admitted by dominant interpreters and reading majorities). The appearance of objectivity in economic value as expressed in monetary terms seems to imbue the marketable literary item or brand itself with value (in relation to the objective circumstances of the market). The expression of value in monetary terms draws on a precisely graded scale enabled by the money-form of measurement (i.e. in money-units). So, understanding monetary terms is of some importance in contemplating the relationship of literary value and economic value with regard to a literary work.

At this point, I am reminded of a conceptual step which seems to be relatively rarely pondered, though well known: *all apprehension of value is in the first instance subjective, whether that is understood in terms of need or desire, grasped as aesthetic or ethical or functional, perceived in relation to things or experiences – and, in the first instance, is expressible in relative normative terms.* The first step in conceiving any kind of value is subjective. This first step is most lucidly (though wordily formulated) in the Analytical Part of Georg Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money* (1978 [1900]). Briefly, Simmel thought of the monetary expression of economic value as a method for rendering the subjective as objective. That move follows mainly two steps. First: there is the recognition that subjective valuations and claims conflict and compete with each other and therefore need to be surrendered or asserted. Second: that leads to setting up, where possible, exchange mechanisms – accepted and negotiable standards of economic value – to process different subjective apprehensions and claims with collective (objective) legitimacy. Thereby, value seems to be transferred to relationships between objects rather than between persons: 'the subjective process, in which differentiation and the growing tension between function and content create the object as a "value," changes to an objective, supra-personal relationship between objects' (Simmel 1978: 79). Monetary measurement provides a method of expressing the supra-personal relationship between objects as those objects' economic values; the system which enables and regulates transactions and behaviours on the basis of monetary measurements is the market and, more broadly, the socio-political and economic world.

Though Simmel's first conceptual step remains plausible, most of his subsequent observations on the materiality and immateriality of money now seem anachronistic. Money is, it has turned out, immaterially material. And it has proved notoriously difficult throughout to characterise money in itself: attempts veer between nominal and commodity descriptions, and switch between thinking of money as measure, contract and property. Much of this difficulty, in my view, has resulted from trying to infer value *after the fact* of money and market, by taking the existence of money and

market for granted or by working backwards from their existing structure ('given that money and market exist, we can say the following about value...'). Simmel's is a relatively rare attempt to start by describing value as if prior to the existence of money and market. However, those fractious efforts to delineate money-in-itself are useful. They show that definite interim steps are needed to understand the value of whatever-is-at-stake (the functional, usable, desirable, etc. value of the thing, work, experience, etc.) as economic value in monetary terms – which is then thought of as the economic value of whatever-is-at-stake.

The definite interim steps involve: (1) precise and graded measurement of the value of whatever-is-at-stake (such as, measurement in terms of labour-time, degree-of-usefulness, estimation-of-derivable-pleasure, grade-of-significance, intensity-of-demand); and (2) a model of the market wherein whatever-is-at-stake is available (clarifying the market's stability, predictability, security, equitability, culture, etc.). The model of the market is determined by and found within the model of the socio-political world where whatever-is-at-stake is manifested (the world described by its natural features, legal and governance regimes, cultures and languages, histories, etc.). In brief, the world-model secures the market-model within itself.

Precise value-measurement and the given market-model can be jointly manoeuvred to confer relevance to each other. Together they can be mutually worked upon, in mathematically determinate ways, to negotiate the value of whatever-is-at-stake towards the realisation of its economic value in monetary terms. Thereby, functional transactions of whatever-is-at-stake in the market are enabled. So, the precise measurement of the value of whatever-is-at-stake is not itself an economic value or a monetary expression. The precision of measurement of the value of whatever-is-at-stake secures its objectivised presence in the world-model. It becomes potentially expressible in monetary terms according to the existing market-model therein. In other words, *graded and precise measurement extricates objective valuation from all or any kind of subjective evaluation*. As and when needed, the precise and graded measurement of the value of whatever-is-at-stake renders it insertable in the market with some kind of mathematically definite calculation of economic value in monetary terms. Precision of measurement is the key to possibly realising economic value in monetary terms, and activating the market.

The other aspect of Simmel's reflections on money which now seems anachronistic has to do with his determination to hold certain kinds of value (such as aesthetic value) as inexpressible in monetary terms, incomprehensible as economic value. That is tantamount to saying that these kinds of values are only expressible in vague and relative normative terms and not comprehensible in precisely graded measurement – that is, these

values always retain their subjective quotient so as to override objectivisation. At the same time, the Synthetic Part of Simmel's argument made unusually prescient observations on the degree to which monetary value penetrates into social and individual life.

The great realisation of our time is that there is no kind of value-perception which cannot be measured in a precise and graded way and thereby objectivised, however conventionally fuzzy and subjectively value-bearing they might have seemed. A history of statistical and probability analysis lies behind this realisation. Happiness, pleasure, freedom, love, suffering, guilt, beauty, intelligence, legitimacy, doubt, prejudice, violence, oppression, trust, life (or loss of life), etc. can all be brought within some kind of index of measurement, expressed in precise degrees according to some standard or paradigm, or organised into some sort of tabular or tractable form. It is mainly a matter of finding the right kinds of gauges and analytical methods to do it. There is therefore very little that cannot be related to, and if necessary transferred into, economic value expressible in monetary terms, given a grasp of the world-model in question and the market-model within it.

So, let me go back to where I started from here: literary researchers should not simply accept the separation of the literary and economic value of literary works as received dogma, and hide behind the ambivalence of subjective prerogatives in literary valuation. They should consider carefully whether there is in fact a relationship and what it is. This is not so much a choice as a responsibility insofar as research is for the public good, and needs to keep the interplay of profits and benefits in view.

Literary researchers then need to do the following kind of research. They need, first, to investigate how far it is possible to release their interpretive evaluations from vague relative normative terms and to express them in precise and graded measurements. Then they need to do the measurements and analyse their findings (the data thus elicited) carefully. This does not mean that they need to denormalise their thinking, but to metricise their norms; they should not abandon purposive interpretation of texts, but show the data-evidenced processes through which interpretations are reached, validated and rendered effective. There are numerous methods and tools out there to ground such investigation: the research is in how to use them to measure as precisely as possible the gradations within, for instance, binaristic literary value-terms like complex/simple, good/bad, important/trivial, pleasing/disturbing, original/clichéd, perceptive/shallow, captivating/dull and so on – with specific texts and contexts in view. And then to conduct the measurements and analyse the data acquired in rationally robust ways to, as far as possible, come to grips with literary value.

Beyond that, it is also incumbent on literary researchers to consider what bearing such precisely graded measurements of literary value – and the measured insights that follow – might have on the existing (or given) world-model and the market-model it contains. That means considering whether there is any way in which, given these models, the measured insights might have a relation to economic value expressed in monetary terms. This however involves a strong grasp of *modelling* the socio-political world and the market so as to render these amenable to accommodating measured insights into literary value meaningfully. Only then can a sufficiently sound way of expressing the relationship of literary value to economic value in monetary terms become possible. Some even more speculative thoughts than the above on appropriate ways of modelling for literary researchers follow soon.

## 38. Doubts

### *Dismal Scientist*

Alexander's research programme as proposed here is straightforwardly realisable. There are three challenges. The first is to create indices of the various literary characteristics you want to investigate. This should not be beyond the ken of literary researchers. The website Metacritic ([www.metacritic.com](http://www.metacritic.com)) comes to mind, which creates a numerical rating by scoring and averaging reviews. I am sure there are multiple other alternatives. Secondly, the researcher would have to add up the returns to literary production – royalties, paid speaking engagements, academic positions, sponsorships, etc. This is challenging but is essentially a data-gathering exercise. Finally, one would need a sufficient number of observations properly selected in order to test the correlation between the expression of the literary characteristic and the financial returns.

The researcher would probably want to run regressions which used several of the literary-characteristic indices simultaneously to judge their joint but separate contributions to financial returns. There are also technical matters like holding countries or eras constant and correcting for inflation and the purchasing power of different currencies, etc.

There are only a few possible results in principle. The index and the returns may be uncorrelated or only weakly correlated. They may be positively correlated or negatively correlated.

But has Alexander set a trap for himself? Are these results really interesting? If literary quality and financial returns are positively correlated, he might see this as perhaps some support for his views. But what if they are negatively correlated – as quality goes up, returns go down. If it does not matter if the two are positively or negatively correlated for Alexander's argument, why bother with expending so much effort? If they are uncorrelated, would this be fatal for Alexander's argument? Of course, something is always better than nothing in occupying the researcher's work time.

### *Alexander Search*

Dismal Scientist has jumped ahead with the prospective project I was considering by: first, setting out a straightforwardly practical method for

potentially establishing a correlation between literary value and economic value; and, second, by speculating on the kinds of correlation that might or might not appear. I had carefully avoided going that far above (in II.37), especially speculating about the kinds of correlation – but I am glad he has jumped ahead, because that means I now have to be upfront about my thinking here.

Let me go along with Dismal Scientist's method in the first instance (before inserting some necessary complexity there), and say that he is right in thinking that the kind of correlation (positive or negative) does not matter. In fact, by assuming some kind of normative proportionality between literary and economic value (he uses 'positive' and 'negative' normatively, not neutrally as for, say, polarity in electromagnetics) he has already presumed that there are normative paradigms which work in the same way for literary and economic value. Every financial speculator knows that this is not the case, that such proportionality of normative correlation is irrelevant: profits can be made however that correlation is characterised, and benefits can thereby follow.

Actually, I suspect that the outcome Dismal Scientist glosses over is the most likely: I would be very surprised if any firm correlation can be established from the data for graded literary value and economic value of literary works – I mean, firm in the sense of being able to express the correlation as 'economic-value-is-a-function-of-literary-value' for literary works. I think one would have to be very fortunate with the data to come up with this, given that it is social data, and such firmness would actually be troubling in various ways ... but let us not go there.

The lack of a firm correlation however does not mean that acquiring the two kinds of data and seeking correlations in the way Dismal Scientist outlines would not be useful. At the least, it will enable numerate correspondences to be loosely suggested if not firmly calculable, and thereby justify an open research project for ongoing measuring and charting. This means that it will be possible to test whether the articulation of some loosely suggested correspondence at one point cannot, simply by articulation, be brought to influence the relationship towards behaving more like a firm correlation at a later point. In brief, if we say loudly there is nearly robust objective evidence that literary value according to the index of 'complexity' has a proportional relationship with economic value, then the loudness and seeming robustness of that observation may influence the relationship sufficiently to actually realise it, to bring about a firm correlation. But I appreciate that what I am saying here sounds like using statistics rhetorically rather than simply for descriptive analysis. That is intellectually unsatisfactory, though that is in fact one of the most practical aspects of how social statistics works.



The more intellectually satisfactory way forward is not merely to collect the two sorts of data as Dismal Scientist suggests and then do a series of regression analyses to seek a correlation, but to compute with the two sorts of data within some modelling boundaries. The modelling boundaries essentially enable the introduction of a necessary number of direct and indirect variables according to specific market- and regime-features. Some of these variables are uncontrollable or only controllable to a very limited degree: Dismal Scientist mentions a few (inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, political interference), these call for correction operations or for the appointment of provisional constants. Some of these variables could be controllable, and the model can test the effect of designedly modifying these variables, or, for that matter, introducing new variables. For instance, increasing or decreasing the numbers of producers, changing production technologies, introducing certain kinds of media and publicity coverage, making certain kinds of costing decisions, moving markers of status recognition, establishing links to other forms of cultural production, etc. – these are all controllable variables which can be factored into the model according to the existing situation or according to a prospective design. Predictive factor analyses and planned insertion/removal/manipulation of controllable variables in such management modelling could go a long way towards nudging firm correlations into existence even between value-sets which do not show a firm correlation initially at the descriptive modelling stage.

Some speculations on how literary researchers should approach the business of modelling will come next.

### *Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

I think Alexander has made some real progress here, but perhaps he does not realise the extent of the changes that would follow from his suggestions – or perhaps he knows them quite well and is pretending not to, so as to better put forth his agenda. Be that as it may, the problem is that the reduction of literature to value eventually destroys the very idea of literature, whatever consistency it still may have. Traditionally, value has been in a tense relationship to truth. On the one hand, they are opposed to each other. Truth is one and is not relative; it is either convincing or it does not exist and is useless. Under a regime of truth, literary works are not an end in themselves, but rather vehicles for something that lies beyond them. It may be the case that they can express this ‘something’ (e.g. a truth about society or the psyche) in a more embodied, sensuously gratifying way than pure conceptual knowledge. In this sense, conceptual and literary knowledge would differ just in their mode, not essence. But it may also be that literature points to a kind of truth that would be unattainable otherwise,

thus making literary truth of a unique kind. On the other hand, however, value and truth are connected as a consequence of each other. Value must be, however minimally, grounded on arguments supported by aesthetic experience; such arguments have to be accepted as true to be able to justify value. Truth, as discovery, unveiling, etc. is something special, not an everyday occurrence, and thus is naturally seen as something valuable.

Alexander's proposal of total valuation of literature erases any trace of truth and with that there is nothing sustaining literature as a kind of specific, valuable discourse. Literature will expand to include almost any book, including, say, Harry Potter and Paulo Coelho. Moreover, in this context of enhanced quantification the literary researcher will have to increasingly rely on arguments of authority, naturally leading market experts to question his expertise. After all, if we are dealing with numbers here, why not just ask consumers directly about their taste? Why get someone to define what is valuable if we can just ask the people? In short, the road Alexander opens is a road that eventually undermines the existence of the literary professional (professor, critic or researcher) as a self-determining agent. As I said, I do not know if Alexander is aware of this, or if this is actually his aim.

## 39. Modelling as Literary Research

### *Alexander Search*

Thinking in terms of ‘modelling’ (verb) here, for social and economic contexts, involves both current senses of the noun ‘model’: as representing an existing system or structure, and as characterising a desirable system or structure. Modelling thus consists in a process whereby the first is achieved and, with that as the basis, the second is determined. Modelling also works amidst the process of moving from the current system/structure towards the desired system/structure: by factoring in developments and new observations, making interim adjustments to the model, and, when necessary, modifying the outcome. Critically, in the process, modelling also has a predictive role – enabling strong predictions. That involves making inferences about the consequences of specific interventions in the current system/structure so as to gauge whether those impede or encourage movement towards the desired system/structure. Modelling thus includes simulating social processes and thereby informing real-world policies and strategies before they are implemented. Importantly, in modelling an existing system/structure, the more data obtained through precise and graded measurements of factors that modellers have the better the model would be, and the more robust its predictive capacities.

The kind of modelling in question here consists in the following. First, preparing models of the existing systems/structures of Academic Research so as to understand what profits and benefits are relatedly derived for the public good at present. Second, thereby modelling systems/structures whereby the profits and benefits of Academic Research can be increased or maximised. And third, considering how precisely we may move from the first to the second model (via policy and strategy interventions). The literary researcher needs to engage with such modelling insofar as literary products (texts, items or brands) enable the generation of profits and benefits for the public good, and particularly insofar as literary pedagogy and scholarship have input therein. This seems to me an obviously necessary project for literary researchers now.

At present, literary scholarship is ill-equipped to make a meaningful contribution to any of those steps. Data drawn from precise and graded

measurements of literary value-norms are very indifferently developed, and the relationship thereof to the economic value of literary products barely understood. Even the indices and analytical methods for obtaining such data are little considered. The speculative project outlined in II.37, "Measuring Values in the Cultural Industries," merely consists in identifying appropriate indices and methods for precise measurement, so as to start putting together databases. Those are necessary first steps to be able to even contemplate engaging with the three steps of modelling above.

Arguably, however, that effort is unlikely to be undertaken unless there is some reasonable conception of what those databases will inform: social modelling. The three-step modelling project outlined above is seldom contemplated in any detail by literary researchers. On the contrary, possible convergences between literary research and the underpinning concepts of social modelling have often been negotiated in such a way as to discourage that project. They have been negotiated so that precise measurements seem impossible, and the formation of usable databases appears unnecessary. Two tendencies have played a particularly debilitating part: the disciplinary insularity of literary scholarship, and a preference for the most diffuse formulations of social and economic theories. Literary researchers have invested heavily in both. For literary researchers to engage with modelling projects as outlined above, it is necessary for them to first disinvest from both tendencies.

Given the current condition of literary research, it is obviously very difficult to articulate what precise sorts of modelling projects literary researchers should engage in – we are as yet too far from being able to start. But it is possible to consider how literary researchers could disinvest from those two tendencies and thereby rethink social concepts so as to inform productive modelling projects. To that end, a few notes follow on two social concepts which have already informed literary scholarship to some degree: 'social systems' and 'cultural capital.' With some rethinking, I suggest, these could be turned towards productive modelling projects by literary researchers. I consider them by turn.

### *Social Systems*

One of the few junctures at which literary researchers tried seriously to make common ground with social systems theory was when Niklas Luhmann's particular take on it appeared, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s (especially with the publication of *Social Systems* 1984, in English 1995). Social systems theory in various guises were well established since at least the 1950s in sociology, economics, political science, management studies, social psychology, communication studies and so on. The manner in which literary researchers took Luhmann on board is revealing: it was either to characterise 'literature' as a social system in itself, with discrete

parameters, or to illustrate some Luhmannian formulation with reference to literary devices in texts. Robert Holub (1994) marked these trends in a useful summary of German literary researchers' use of Luhmann. Holub felt that: 'Unlike past and current attempts to revitalise or reform literary studies, systems theory has done little more than add a layer of technical vocabulary to phenomena that have been recognised and analysed for many decades' (Holub 1994:150).

That this technical vocabulary could be used to claim a distinctive space within the burgeoning and institutionalisation of Literary Theory at the time, especially apropos of Derridean deconstruction, was an incentive (in this vein Schwantz's early publications, especially 1987 and 1995, proved influential). More generally, for literary researchers the appeal of Luhmann's version of social systems lay in his main contribution to it: the formulation of autopoietic systems. It seemed that the discreteness of a system could be accounted through a deontological and momentary apprehension of its elements. This promised the possibility of describing 'literature' as a discrete system with *perpetually received* features, composed of cognitive, communicative and conventionalised elements. Luhmann's *Art as a Social System* (1995, in English 2000), describing art as an autopoietic system (including literature, see Luhmann 1995: 25 and *passim* thereafter), gave authoritative backing for that promise. Only incidental comments on economic and political systems were offered, i.e. insofar as those appear amidst the intellection of texts.

Little has happened since to dislodge the idea that literature should be described as a discrete social system, though nuances from cybernetic and scientific knowledge systems have occasionally been imported to that end (for overviews, see Fokkema and Ibsch 2000: Ch.6, and Clarke 2011). Such an approach seems to me to be obviously and implausibly limited. It appears to present literature and literary scholarship as purely manifested in texts and archives, composed of elements which operate within and via texts. It carefully elides the production and dissemination processes involved. It wipes away the economic calculations and institutional reckonings and political subscriptions (social systems all) which penetrate and suffuse literature without overt inscription *within* literature or literary scholarship. It also seems to remove literature and literary research from any possible access to the kind of modelling outlined above. By this account, it seems that literature and literary scholarship can only be modelled as a singularity – removed from economic, political, cultural, technological, etc. systems unless those are conceived within literature and are textualized accordingly.

To enable the kind of modelling described above, it is expedient for literary researchers to disinvest from conceiving of literature and literary research as a discrete system. It is necessary instead to invest in thinking

about literature and literary research as factors (or as sub-systems) within more complex and inclusive social system models. In such a model, literature is one among various factors which interpenetrate and modify each other continuously. *In toto* this model would approximate a socio-political world system, and necessarily contain a market system within it. Such complex systems models give little purchase for autopoietic conceptions of discrete areas at a received moment; they are more dynamic in charting interpenetrations, change and progressive production.

To begin such a complex modelling project, some sort of focal point (a conceptual fulcrum) would be useful, such as could accommodate literature and literary scholarship as a significant (chartable) factor. Appointing a focal point in complex systems modelling does not mean confining research to discrete disciplines. It simply means starting with a system where boundaries are definable but porous and overlapping, from which input and output loops through other systems are tractable. The obvious focal point that suggests itself here is one where systems analysis has been most productive: the organisational unit with a management apparatus. For the purpose of literary researchers, for instance, the focal point could be the higher education and research organisation (the University and Ministry), with input and outputs loops stretching across various corporate, governmental, legal, cultural and other organisations and sectors and regimes. To take a manageable path, literary researchers may usefully start with systems principles developed between, say, Talcott Parsons' *Social Systems* (1951) and David Silverman's *Theory of Organizations* (1971). They could then undertake modelling of the higher education and research organisation accordingly, and first locate the place of literature and literary scholarship therein. Data sets on the latter elicited by precise and graded measurement could then be fed into the model. Then further levels of methodological nuancing could be introduced according to developments in social systems thinking since.

But I am jumping the gun. What data and models literary researchers can most productively work with will become apparent only if they disinvest from the notion that literature is a discrete, self-referential social system – and that is the point.

### *Cultural Capital*

To place literature and literary research as a factor or sub-system within a complex social system, the concept of 'cultural capital' offers some obvious advantages. Literary researchers have taken recourse to it mostly when they wish to step outside the embrace of a discrete disciplinary field of 'literature' (composed of texts with literary value shining out of texts for the discerning and scholarly). As a factor within cultural capital, literature and literary scholarship appear amidst a network of relationships with

other factors bearing cultural capital (architecture, education, consumer goods, art, etc.). These all overlap with or are transferable to or are exchangeable with other kinds of capital (social, and, especially, economic capital). Altogether, a complex structure of systems constituted by organisations (educational, legal, administrative, economic, etc.) and thereby socio-political world arrangements (with social stratifications, conventional values, habitats, environments, etc.) can be articulated.

When literary researchers wish to place some aspect of literature as not predominantly emergent from texts but as constituted by markets, institutions, political interests, etc. they find the concept of cultural capital to be helpful: for instance, to understand literary canon formation (e.g. Guillory 1993) or the significance of literary prizes (e.g. English 2008). But these do not go as far as modelling literature within complex social systems in the above sense. These do not try to clarify the existing model so that it can be engineered towards maximising benefits and profits. They usually assume that there is a model out there, vaguely apprehensible, which is momentarily put into relief by focusing on a literary issue. At present, if some kind of modelling in relation to literature is contemplated, it is considered to be the prerogative of sociologists of literature, or, more likely, sociologists of culture, or, even more likely, researchers of cultural industries. Somehow, it is not considered quite the task of the literary researcher.

But it is, or should become, the task of the literary researcher.

For this task, Pierre Bourdieu's sense of cultural capital is of limited use, attractive as it is to literary researchers. That is useful for the literary researcher who contributes to modelling insofar as Bourdieu (1983, in English 1986) simplified it into several types and even considered their correlation to economic capital. But he did this so circumspectly that, in fact, correlating is discouraged:

economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital and [...] these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital, never entirely reducible to that definition, produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal (not least from their possessors) the fact that economic capital is at their root, in other words – but only in the last analysis – at the root of their effects. (Bourdieu 1986: 255)

The reasons for this are best understood by contemplating the larger account of cultural capital in Bourdieu (1975, in English 1984), where it converges with the economic indirectly, by actively appearing separate. The appearance of separateness, he argued, enables the maintenance of class divisions and privileges. In this account, in fact, correlating is impossible because the measurement of cultural capital is of a different order from economic capital. Where the latter works functionally only in precise

and graded measurement, the former is effective in implicitly vague normative terms. In the most habituated and internalised enunciations of cultural capital, which naturalises the class structure and its concomitant social order, it is vagueness more than precision which is necessary:

All the agents in a given social formation share a set of basic perceptual schemes, which receive the beginnings of objectification in the pairs of antagonistic adjectives commonly used to classify and qualify persons or objects in the most varied areas of practice. The network of opposites between high (sublime, elevated, pure) and low (vulgar, low, modest), spiritual and material, fine (refined, elegant) and coarse (heavy, fat, crude, brutal), light (refined, lively, sharp, adroit) and heavy (slow, thick, blunt, laborious, clumsy), free and forced, broad and narrow, or, in another dimension, between unique (rare, different, distinguished, exclusive, exceptional, singular, novel) and common (ordinary, banal, commonplace, trivial, routine), brilliant (intelligent) and dull (obscure, grey, mediocre), is the matrix of all the commonplaces which find such ready acceptance because behind them lies the whole social order. The network has its ultimate source in the opposition between the 'élite' of the dominant and the mass of the dominated, a contingent, disorganized multiplicity, interchangeable and innumerable, existing only statistically. (Bourdieu 1984: 468)

The logic of the binaristic value-terms of literary evaluation noted in II.37, "Measuring Values in the Cultural Industries," is given here as intrinsic to the very conception of cultural capital.

Obviously, Bourdieu's views in this respect are more ideologically driven than useful for the kind of modelling project outlined above. The literary researcher's modelling draws upon precise measurements of literary value and other factors, including economic value, in substantial databases and focuses on organisations within complex social systems. This researcher can neither consider that the correlations between all factors are impossible and nor accept that cultural capital (which includes literary value) has to be grounded in vague normative binaries. On the contrary, the first step is to have precise and graded measurements of literary value – indeed, of cultural capital generally.

Fortunately, the ground for this has been prepared by Academic Researchers who have adopted Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital without going with his ideological subscriptions, and have brought it to the fields of educational and organisation research. Precise and graded measurement of cultural capital for school students were offered on the back of Bourdieu's formulation, even as it was being received and assimilated, by Paul DiMaggio (1982). DiMaggio was careful in limiting the scope of his measurements with Bourdieu's objections in mind (he had reviewed Bourdieu's work and its limitations carefully, see DiMaggio



1979). In fact, measuring cultural capital and considering Bourdieu's formulation are now quite different matters, and the former can be done in its own terms and without much fussing about Bourdieu. Direct correlations between cultural, social and economic capital can be anticipated thereby. Along those lines, the measurements for all forms of capital, including the cultural, offered by James Spillane, Tim Hallett and John Diamond (2003) have an alluring directness about them. Their paper also has a salutary focus on the intersection of educational institutions (elementary schools) and organisation-systems more generally (focusing on leadership and followership).

The above observations on social systems and cultural capital suggest, I hope, a way forward for literary researchers to engage with precise measurement and modelling projects. Thereby the benefits and profits to be garnered from literary research would become considerably clearer and could be functionalised by the University and Ministry.

## 40. On Alexander's Projects

*Suman Gupta*

I find Alexander's project outlines in II.37, "Measuring Values in the Cultural Industries," and II.39, "Modelling as Literary Research," to be unusually boring – especially the latter. Perhaps he needed to be long-winded and dry to put across arguments which he felt literary researchers are not interested in and therefore not necessarily informed of. It might be possible to do precise measurements of literary value, build databases and do systems modelling as Alexander suggests. I do not want to have anything to do with it. That is not why I teach or do research on literary matters. Quite possibly, most literary researchers feel as I do in this regard.

I suspect that is part of the point Alexander is quietly making here, or, if it is not, that is the main point I take from these observations anyway. My lack of interest, probably shared by many in literary studies, does translate into ignorance of metrics and modelling. I realise that it is not literary researchers who are most likely to engage with the projects Alexander outlines (despite his insistence), and nor are they needed to. Exactly such projects, focused on literary value or cultural capital and the economic value of literary items and brands, can be undertaken by any quant in the accounting or computing unit of the University, Ministry, Corporate Research Provider – or, if a bit more rigour and imagination seems desirable, an economics or statistics or engineering Academic Researcher could be put to work on it. This project does not need literary researchers. What is needed from literary researchers can be obtained from them without involving them in the projects. They can simply be asked to contribute to a survey or two, fill in a questionnaire or two, record a few interviews and so on, for their input to be sufficiently elicited.

I also realise that metrics and modelling can then be used by the University and Ministry to engineer literary research towards beneficial and profitable models of academic work for the entrepreneurial public good. When that happens, literary researchers will be ill-placed to interrogate those moves. They will be unable to argue with the rationale of metrics and models because they are too ignorant and uninterested in it. They will quickly lose possession of what they consider to be their discipline, their area of specialisation.

So, it is perhaps expedient for literary researchers to take possession of the projects Alexander describes so as to be able to keep possession of what they have. But these are boring projects.

With those thoughts in mind, I have, with many stifled yawns, read Alexander's proposals fairly carefully. Three thoughts crossed my mind.

First: where the systems-based modelling project he describes does, in one sense, introduce a level of complexity, it also, in another sense, proceeds by constant reductions of complexity. For instance, appointing the Academic Organisation as a focal point for modelling, in terms of which other systems are located, courts the danger of reducing complexity. It could involve factoring out aspects of valuations and other processes which are germane to literature but not of tractable interest to the focalised organisation. A similar reduction of complexity occurs where he mentions how Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital is disregarded by those who provide graded measurements of cultural capital. The latter exercise involves applications of precise gauges, practical mensuration tools, which effectively fail to capture the fuzzy dimensions of cultural capital. To make fuzziness clear is to disregard fuzziness as an existing and functioning feature. In fact, it seems to me that all the possibilities of converting vague normative evaluations into precise and graded valuation that Alexander mentions may involve reduction of complexity – may entail choosing one gauge for clarity from the many intricately interwoven gauges that could be relevant and work jointly. If databases are formed through reduction of complexity, then the modelling undertaken may well be skewed. In that case, by Alexander's terms, the predictive capacity of models could be adversely affected. Bad predictions and consequently deleterious interventions may follow.

Second: for the purposive modelling project Alexander envisages (from an existing to a desirable model) it is possible that modelling decisions may interfere in the reality which is modelled. The reality being modelled may adapt to modelling decisions, especially if they become known in the data collection phase and before the model is completed. For instance, if a book retailer comes across precise measurements of literary value, she might begin advertising books in their terms rather than the conventional norms (pronouncements by authorities). But the graded and precise measurements are in fact obtained to model literary transactions which in reality work through conventional norms. So, advertising with precise measurements may influence book consumption and reading habits and change the underlying reality that is being modelled. If that happens, then the model-in-progress becomes redundant before it becomes usable, before a desirable model can be envisaged from it. It then becomes impossible to say whether any desired model that can be inferred is valid. If policy interventions are made on an existing model which is out of

synch with the reality, then they may be detrimental to rather than productive of profits, benefits, and the public good.

Third: Alexander's projects seem to be designed to absolve leaders in the University and bureaucrats in the Ministry of responsibility for their entrepreneurial decisions, and indeed to disable political critique and action generally. This is an old argument against the systems-based thinking that Alexander takes for granted here (in line with Habermas's 1987 critique of Luhmann's formulations, though Alexander has not quite gone along with Luhmann). Management responsibility and political agency seem irrelevant because all actions and consequences can be thought of as emerging from and returning to the internal dynamics of the models. Everything can be explained away as arising from the limitations of models, which can be constantly modified to putatively overcome revealed limitations. If some University boss consults a model to make disastrous interventions, causing losses and conflicts, then the boss can plead that it is the model that is responsible, not he (if a fall-guy is needed the data-providers can be blamed, or, at a pinch, the researcher who did the modelling). And yet, if literary researchers warn this boss of disastrous consequences before he makes those interventions, he could overrule them by pointing to the robust predictive capacities of the model. The system-based model becomes the stand-in for agency and responsibility, which are then removed from the political sphere.

## 41. Disqualifications and Qualifications

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

I have just two comments on Alexander's proposals in II.39, "Modeling as Literary Research."

Concerning models, I believe them to be unfeasible in this context, not because of their instruments of analysis or their methodology, but due to the nature of the object. In the way I see literature, it is impossible to talk about *literary discourse*. The adjective 'literary' cannot be given to any group of writings based on a set of determinate traits. The Russian Formalists debunked that in the 1920s already. The word 'literary' should be kept for successful works, for those which have something interesting about them, either because of their self-constitution, their principle of construction, or due to that which they enable us to see. In fact, both these dimensions of the 'literary' are closely connected. And to complicate things further, all these change historically, for time erodes layers of meaning in works and allows them to acquire new ones. Models, then, would be useless because they would: (1) either have to establish as their corpus some collection of *strong* literature, which is already difficult to determine, and in any case has to do with a very restricted set of texts which have a weak purchase in social effect; (2) or dissolve 'literature' in the mass of books produced by the culture industry at large. Here it would make more sense just to talk about texts, or perhaps better, 'signifying practices.' And again, to repeat something I said before, in this case there would be no need for a *literary scholar* to do the modelling, for any technician could do it on a statistical basis. And I wonder if the big industries do not do that already ...

Regarding cultural capital, I believe that there is no way of using the concept in a neutral way. It is interesting to note that concepts not only bring with them particular semantic fields and webs of association, but also suggest forms of use. 'Cultural capital' can only be adopted in a denunciatory way, as an indictment of society. As a neutral term is falls apart, for it cannot exist on its own, can never be presented as such, but over the back of greatness or any other positive term. If you say that Beethoven has cultural capital just because of a conscious agreement among a number of upper class listeners, it becomes unsustainable to value him. Once the act of choosing comes to the fore, one could always

question why Beethoven should be so valued instead of someone else. In short, cultural capital will always depend on a particular ideological game, which could be denounced to establish another game.

### *Dismal Scientist*

Suman affects to be bored by Alexander's latest, but then conducts a controlled jeremiad against modelling. I think Suman is worried.

It is not a coincidence that Suman starts to worry just as Alexander is finally on the verge of making his point. I, for my part, was worried that Alexander's attractive project might flounder on an inability to find the entrepreneurial return to the literary equivalent of blue-skies research (see II.27, "Blue-Skies Research"). But Alexander's deployment of the concept of cultural capital may have solved this problem once and for all. Only one further qualification is necessary.

There is indeed some difficulty in seeing why the University and the Ministry would subsidise the acquisition of cultural capital by the individual researcher, thus depriving this activity of a corresponding objective revenue stream. But if we think of the cultural capital as accruing primarily to the University and the Ministry (the organisation), not the individual, this problem is obviated. The individual researcher's entrepreneurial generation of cultural capital will be financed by the University or the Ministry to the extent that this cultural capital redounds or accrues directly to them.

How can the University or the Ministry measure this cultural capital? Actually, it does not matter very much. The University or the Ministry can delegate this judgment to one of its employees, or employ outside experts to make subjective judgments. The fact that a judgment is subjective will not disadvantage the academic researcher who can be relied upon to correctly identify the consistent elements of this judgment over a short time and respond accordingly, as long as the nature of the subjectivity does not change suddenly. Alternately, the University and/or the Ministry can identify this cultural capital with the production of quantitative measures, such as amount of media coverage, or citations in certain journals. These measures will be more or less adequate, but as the cultural capital is to benefit the University and the Ministry, any inadequacy in the measures will have to be absorbed by the entity in question.

## 42. The Shrinking Teacher and Pedagogical AI

*Suman Gupta*

Much as I enjoy futuristic drama featuring intelligent robots, replicants, androids, synths, etc., I do not think of these as other than fantastic – Artificial Intelligence (AI) as fantasy quasi-human *entities*, either undifferentiated from human beings or a superior species of faux humans, suddenly crossing some line into sentience. But I do take AI as *process* very seriously, and find proportions of AI beaver-ing away everywhere. My way of understanding the relation between the human and AI, without trying to delineate either, is as a mutually defined process, and goes as follows. *If* at a given time ‘the human’ is understood (by human beings) as the sum total of all abilities that are specific to human beings, *then* the automatization of any of those abilities is considered (by human beings) as a transfer to AI and a corresponding reduction of ‘the human.’ Thus, as AI grows the human shrinks; they have an inverse proportional relationship. It does not concern me particularly when only the human and no AI could be conceived, or when a point might come when the human might shrink out of existence – so that AI becomes indistinguishable from the human, perhaps superhuman. I am inclined to think of the correlation between the shrinking human and the growing AI as following an asymptotic curve. Consequently, impressively wide-ranging as recent reflections on the ‘posthuman’ have been, they usually seem to me a bit too forward in annulling the conception of the human – though these have been of particular interest to literary researchers (N. Katherine Hayles, Bruce Clarke, Stefan Herbrechter, Manuela Rossini, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Matthew A. Taylor and others have made substantial contributions, and a *Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman* 2017 is available). I prefer to think in terms of the shrinking human and correspondingly growing AI. And I am saying all this here so as to consider one dimension of this equation: the shrinking (human) teacher and growing (pedagogical) AI.

The notion crossed my mind as I was going through Alexander’s postings on knowledge production above. Let us put the literary researcher aside for the moment (parenthetically noting that posthuman conditions of research, particularly research into pedagogy, are also being

thought through, see Adams and Thompson 2016, Taylor and Hughes eds. 2016, Snaza and Weaver eds. 2015). Let us pause instead on the implications of what Alexander has been arguing apropos of pedagogic programmes in the entrepreneurial University. Alexander's arguments go in interestingly contrary directions from that perspective. With regard to teaching close reading and literary interpretation, he maintains that these are conveyed by practice and work in practice. If I understand that correctly, this means that these are best taught and learned by interaction and jointly working on texts – a kind of hands-on instruction between teachers and students and between students themselves. The emphasis on practice, especially for literary knowledge-skills, centres teaching with classroom and tutorial contacts, with direct exchanges and assessment. With regard to investigating literary values and their profitable dimensions (here teaching is not mentioned directly), Alexander says that precise measurement, data collection and system modelling are the way forward. Indirectly, that has significant implications for teaching – potentially for reducing the need for direct contact and hands-on instruction; in brief, the emphasis on practice is diluted. With precise measurements and seemingly workable models it inevitably becomes possible to automatize some proportion of teaching – to increase pedagogical AI's contribution and shrink the teacher's.

This situation is very far from being peculiar to the University. Corporate Research Providers have been considering the ongoing and coming contribution of AI to all sectors of production with considerable enthusiasm. A McKinsey report (2017) offers the following estimate of AI's coming progress, the economic advantages it offers, and the implications for education:

Overall, we estimate that 49 percent of the activities that people are paid to do in the global economy have the potential to be automated by adapting currently demonstrated technology. While less than 5 percent of occupations can be fully automated, about 60 percent have at least 30 percent of activities that can technically be automated. (5)

We estimate the productivity injection it could give to the global economy as being between 0.8 and 1.4 percent of global GDP annually, assuming that human labor replaced by automation would rejoin the workforce and be as productive as it was in 2014. Considering the labor substitution effect alone, we calculate that, by 2055, automation would potentially add productivity growth in the largest economies of the world (G19 plus Nigeria) that is the equivalent of an additional 1.1 billion to 2.3 billion full-time workers. (15)

Education systems will need to evolve for a changed workplace, with policy makers working with education providers to improve basic skills in the



STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and put a new emphasis on creativity, as well as on critical and systems thinking. For all, developing agility, resilience, and flexibility will be important at a time when everybody's job is likely to change to some degree.

Finally, automation will create an opportunity for those in work to make use of the innate human skills that machines have the hardest time replicating: logical thinking and problem solving, social and emotional capabilities, providing expertise, coaching and developing others, and creativity. [...] As machines take on ever more of the predictable activities of the workday, these skills will be at a premium. Automation could make us all more human. (19)

It is evident that leaders of all sorts are pretty safe from AI (insofar as considered), and workers of all sorts will have to fill the gaps which AI leaves – which is to say that human work will have to shrink to narrower precincts for the public good. In a way then, human work will become both ‘more human,’ as the McKinsey report puts it, and less human, shrunk to a complement of or facilitator for AI as determined by leaders (till ...). The Corporate Research Provider's interest in this area naturally extends to the entrepreneurial Ministry – all Ministries – too. So, for instance, anticipating some economic problems following the Brexit referendum of 2016, the UK government had the following optimistic advice in a Deloitte report (2016) on the prospects:

Data from Oxford academics Carl Frey and Michael Osborne, working with Deloitte, suggests that in the public sector administrative and operative roles are at high probability of automation over the next two decades while other public sector jobs – those in the frontline or requiring substantial levels of complex thinking – are highly resistant to complete automation but could be enhanced by such technologies. Around a quarter of public sector workers are employed in administrative or operative jobs which have a high chance of automation, based on Frey and Osborne's estimates. Automation will not displace employees overnight – its impact is gradual – but it could see 861,000 public sector jobs lost by 2030. That would deliver a saving of £17 billion off the public sector paybill in 2030 compared to 2015.

Automation could also help the sector to release surplus real estate. While space might need to be adapted for the technology, it is likely a substantial proportion of office space currently occupied by the administrative or operative public sector could be released for sale. Disposing those surplus assets could reduce revenue expenditure and generate capital returns. (16)

The growing AI and the shrinking human, as the McKinsey report notes, have definite implications for education from an entrepreneurial perspective. Those are being mulled and acted upon with considerable excitement and trepidation. At present, the sphere where AI's relation to

the teacher in higher education, in University pedagogy programmes, can be most effectively developed appears to be online programmes delivered from a distance (or rather, without regard for location). Much of this discussion now revolves around Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs (the debate can be traced from Noble 2002, Trends 2001, to, for instance, Rhoads 2015). The numerous celebratory University and Ministry policy papers and Corporate and Academic Research publications focused on MOOCs however cause some confusion. They give the impression that MOOCs are a distinct domain which does not modify that of the University and what conventionally happens there; that MOOCs work in a separate virtual space while the University remains a concrete institution; that MOOCs are the concern of a small specialist coterie in the University (particularly beloved of academic leaders) while the rest continue untouched. In a way, this is analogous to thinking of AI as entity rather than as a process with an inverse proportional relationship with the human. MOOCs are a part of the pedagogic AI which is aptly understood in an inverse proportional relation to the human teacher in the University (any teacher in any university). It is best to put aside the specificities of MOOCs as domain in the first instance, and simply consider the pedagogic AI and the human teacher in an economic relationship.

So, here is how the teacher is located in the midst of entrepreneurial considerations.

Two main kinds of costs are involved in a University educational programme: infrastructure (classrooms, labs, equipment, material, etc.) and employment (for teachers, laboratory technicians, librarians, secretaries, janitors, etc.). The returns, which have to include profits, are from some combination or all of the following: student fees; public funding (if any, possibly according to unit cost per student); sponsorship (e.g. corporate investment, charitable donations, bequests). The products of University education programmes are understood in terms of certain targets: e.g. of employability (which employers can confirm), student satisfaction (which does depend a bit on how well students perform in assessments) ... is there anything else worth worrying about? The achievement of targets can be precisely measured by conducting performance and attitude surveys and gathering data on post-University careers and incomes. Those can be correlated to the costs and returns in straightforwardly monetary terms. The overall entrepreneurial direction that any leader in the University and bureaucrat in the Ministry would take involves: reducing costs and increasing returns while maintaining – and preferably enhancing – the achievement of targets (production).

Let us break that down further for the specific role of the teacher. There are four factors to consider here: (1) the costs of the teacher's time that the University has to pay for; (2) the costs of the space occupied by

the teacher (and students) that the University has to pay for; (3) the materials and administrative support that the teacher (and students) need which the University has to pay for; (4) the number of students that each teacher has to process (which is actually a function of the first three). It appears that the costs in each factor can be reduced by introducing AI to some degree in each, such that returns stay the same or increase and it seems that targets are achieved to the same standard or bettered. Thus:

(1) *Teachers' time*: Time on curriculum setting can be reduced by centralising curriculum parameters and making their management automatic to a great degree, so that only minimum information on curriculum changes have to be fed to the automatic system when called for. Time on teaching contact can be reduced by making as many time-consuming elements as possible available through machine-managed systems: e.g. with pre-distributed online lectures and notes, preparatory online self-training programmes for students, mechanical feedback where possible. Time on assessment can be reduced by introducing automatic grading for objective kinds of testing, by routinized assessment feedback, automatic plagiarism checking, automatic grade adjustments across cohorts according to desirable performance targets, automatic record keeping and student profiling, etc.

(2) *Teachers' space*: Large lectures can be put and managed online, and periodically updated, so lecture halls become largely unnecessary (can be hired when needed). Tutorials can be organised in virtual classrooms, chatrooms and online forums. These measures reduce the need for teaching rooms, and enable cost-effective management of less space. Teachers' need for office space is correspondingly minimised – much of the teaching can be put under flexible working from home.

(3) *Materials and administrative support for teachers*: Almost all administrative support can be automatized to the extent that no special administrative or secretarial staffing is needed: record keeping, liaising with students, management of registrations and awards, etc. What remains can be done by teachers themselves, by simply inputting into programmes according to automatic reminders and instructions. Libraries can be made largely virtual, and library staff accordingly reduced. Only laboratory support and technical services have to be maintained, but those too can be centralised and mechanised to some degree.

(4) *Student-Teacher ratio*: All the above moves enable more students to be processed by fewer teachers. But a key point here is that students have to cooperate with this process, so that student satisfaction targets are met and optimism about employability prevails – so that the University continues to be profitably productive. To engage with automatized

learning effectively at the expense of human input, students merely need to be persuaded that some degree of machine-aided autodidacticism is profitable, that independent or self-motivated learning are sought-after skills by employers. In this, metrics and models can be invaluable.

In brief, the shrinking teacher is complemented by growing (and distributed and coordinated) AI capabilities in the University. Inevitably, the profit-making potential of the entrepreneurial University is accordingly enhanced, insofar as competition allows.

What options are there for the literary teacher and researcher given these circumstances?

The obvious options are presented rather well by Alexander through this part. On the one hand, literary teachers and researchers can strive to maintain a quotient of their work which is not transferrable to AI: such as, close reading and literary interpretation as practice, which can only be taught and learned through practice, by human contact and interaction. This means putting a limit to how far the literary teacher can shrink. On the other hand, literary teachers and researchers can try to take possession of the value-measurement, data-collection and modelling projects that Alexander recommends: in brief, become integrated within the process that produces the AI which might bear on literary production. Literary teachers can contribute the sources for these projects and literary researchers (often the same person) can learn how to use these sources to produce appropriate models. This means contributing to shrinking the literary teacher, but in such a way that the literary teacher and researcher can control the path of shrinkage to some extent.

Both these options play along with the inevitable shrinkage of the literary teacher and, in the long run, therefore the literary researcher – so that, if at all, only a minute place will be left for literary scholarship in the University as that is understood now. The McKinsey report (2017) offers little scope for much remaining of literary scholarship as AI advances and policy makers (in the Ministry) work with education providers (in the University) accordingly.

There is a further option, but it is, at present, utterly beyond the reach of Alexander, of leaders in the entrepreneurial University and bureaucrats in the entrepreneurial Ministry, of Corporate Research Providers. It is simply beyond the small and frigid imagination of neoliberal thought. With growing AI in relation to the shrinking human, the current dominance of neoliberal thought reaches a kind of insurmountable wall. About the precincts beyond this, the neoliberal thinker and entrepreneurial actor can not only not speak but cannot even conceive so as to pass over in silence. But in a way, the path beyond is obvious. One of the conundrums that

cuts through all Alexander's reflections, and through all the reports and ideas cited above, is that the inverse proportional relation of AI to the human does not mean that human beings are going to disappear. The shrinking human is not correlated to the quantity of human beings. The shrinking human apropos of AI only relates to what human beings can do *insofar as that is economically productive*, and not to the sheer presence of human beings in the world.

Let me put this in the terms of our time. The obvious fallout of the McKinsey report's (2017) or the Deloitte report's (2016) observations is that the conventional correlation between employment and productivity is being broken by advanced automatization. Conventionally, the more people in employment the higher productivity was likely to be. These reports suggest that productivity will be high even if there is low employment, in fact, because there is low employment and high automatization. So, the segment of the human population which is unemployed and unproductive will grow. But the entrepreneurial vision, the neoliberal thinker, is unable to conceive of human beings as other than employed and productive. The reports cited go through peculiar contortions to redistribute human beings to other kinds of productive employment, or simply hurriedly gloss over their increasingly numerous but unproductive and unemployed presence. There is a kind of moralistic discomfort about facing this mass of unemployed and unproductive human beings to come, as if they are somehow tainted and morally culpable. After all, being productive and unemployed is considered *a priori* good. Thus, the entrepreneurial University and Ministry are happy to produce unemployment and unproductive human beings by introducing AI in degrees, but somehow feel that all human beings should still be productive and employed and are otherwise not quite human beings.

Let us get rid of that neoliberal moral opprobrium. There is an older way of thinking about this, one that welcomes AI – an achievement of painstaking research – and considers that the unemployment and unproductiveness it will bring about releases human beings from bondage. That is, the bondage of being employed and productive within a demanding, burdensome, top-down politico-economic system. Instead of characterising the mass of unproductive and unemployed human beings to come as morally culpable, it is possible to consider them as *freed human beings*. To conceive the lives of *freed human beings* where production and distribution have largely been automatized always appears a step too far from the present – utterly grounded in entrepreneurial rationales as the present is, and from within which we are obliged to speak. But there have been some optimistic efforts in that direction. I find myself occasionally returning to Herbert Marcuse's attempt to articulate the order of freed human beings in *An Essay on Liberation* (1969):

The new sensibility, which expresses the ascent of the life instincts over aggressiveness and guilt, would foster, on a social scale, the vital need for the abolition of injustice and misery and would shape the further evolution of the 'standard of living.' The life instincts would find rational expression (sublimation) in planning the distribution of the socially necessary labor time within and among the various branches of production, thus setting priorities of goals and choices: not only what to produce but also the 'form' of the product. The liberated consciousness would promote the development of a science and technology free to discover and realise the possibilities of things and men in the protection and gratification of life, playing with the potentialities of form and matter for the attainment of this goal. Technique would then tend to become art, and art would tend to form reality: the opposition between imagination and reason, higher and lower faculties, poetic and scientific thought, would be invalidated. Emergence of a new Reality Principle: under which a new sensibility and a desublimated scientific intelligence would combine in the creation of an aesthetic ethos. (23-4)

Perhaps literary teachers and researchers are well-placed to develop knowledge in terms of freed human beings. Perhaps they cannot be wholly subsumed into entrepreneurial rationales and projects.

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Here is a thought that seems to be tangentially but strangely relevant at this point. The eight-hour working day was an important victory of the labour movement in the early twentieth century. Its underlying idea was that each 24-hour cycle should be equally divided into work, rest and freedom to do whatever one wants, including self-improvement as a human being. With the development of personal computers, the internet, social networking and the like, and with the intensification of the struggle of capital against time, this historical achievement has been eroded in several sectors of the economy, including some high-paying ones (see Crary 2013).

Theodor Adorno's (1991 [1977]) observations on 'free time' relate to an earlier period, in which the colonisation of the period of not working was still new. What he pointed out was that time which was meant to belong to the labourer no longer does, because she had been transformed into a consumer. The daily hours not employed in work are used to consume goods, either material – to go shopping – or immaterial, by passively watching or listening to cultural products. Life became divided into physical or mental exertion with no pleasure, on the one side, and relaxation without thinking, on the other. Concentration and toil became synonymous. In this context, those who might enjoy their work are considered freaks, potentially disruptive figures. (This may explain the social

necessity for the image of the crazy scientist; for someone to be invested in her profession, she must be a loony.) Professors are in that class. Their work belongs to them and they do not feel alienated from it; that is why they could work so much, because the distinction of work-time versus leisure-time does not apply to them. That which was an image of resistance and dissent to begin with has now become an impulse to further exploitation.

### **III. SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING: THE MONOGRAPH**



## 43. Research Work and Scholarly Publishing

### *Alexander Search*

There are a significant number of scholarly publications on scholarly publishing: over 350 directly relevant books in the British Library, and as many academic articles other than those in the journal devoted entirely to the business (*Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, University of Toronto). These offer plenty of informative background material. With regard to the economic rationale of the relationship between research work (academic authoring) and scholarly publishing, however, I am yet to find a book-length discussion and only a few at paper-length are available (Greco 2015 is particularly illuminating). Instead of recourse to received formulations then, it is best to start from scratch here. By way of a plausible approach to this rationale, two steps suggest themselves: first, setting out the economic rationale for the standard relationship between authoring and publishing in general; and second, using that as a base to consider the economic rationale of academic authoring and scholarly publishing. The second step should clarify the entrepreneurial impetuses that motivate academic researchers and scholarly publishers.

Further, given our focus on literary research here, certain delimitations in focusing on academic authoring would be helpful. So, in the following observations on scholarly publishing I focus mainly on the Research Monograph, and lead up to it by considering the authored book in general first. The Research Monograph has a particular and conventionalised significance in literary research, though not necessarily for other disciplines – the Journal Research Paper often takes precedence elsewhere, and I will consider that too in due course. The kind of Research Monograph I have in mind is one that is widely regarded as least profitable, least likely to generate significant profits for the publisher or author. As a rule of thumb, I have in mind the PhD dissertation that is converted into a Research Monograph and marketed as such by a publishing firm – the Scholarly Publisher. This sort of Research Monograph comes with a double significance: explicit ratification of professional standards from the University in conferring a PhD, and acceptance of larger market possibilities from a Scholarly Publisher (in offering a publishing contract). Of course, there are some intermediate steps that researchers have to take to convert their PhD

dissertations into published monographs – let us put those aside. I have in mind the dissertation-to-book as a rule of thumb: that is to say, a great many Research Monographs are of this generic sort, irrespective of whether they began as PhD projects. Given my focus on this putatively less profitable form, other obviously profitable kinds of research publications are not considered here: such as, Research Monographs by celebrated (star) scholars; and ‘cash cows’ like textbooks and guidebooks, encyclopaedias and other reference books, and (of particular relevance to literary research) biographies and broad-ranging or popular histories. The kind of Research Monograph in focus here is considered a baseline of low profitability; the relative high profitability of other kinds of research publications is self-evident by contrast.

Let me get back to that first step, an outline of the economic rationale for the standard relationship between authoring and publishing in general. So as to have a simple template to depart from (a kind of ‘original contract’), let me elide some significant issues, such as, the differences between specific legal regimes (e.g. country-wise in relation to copyright, licensing, limits on expression). And let me reserve discussion of certain issues which have an enormous significance for scholarly authoring and publishing: digital and open-access publishing, subsidies for publication, self-publication. I will take those up in due course. The main points of the economic rationale for the standard relationship are embedded in a standard publishing Agreement between (to use the legal terms for parties involved) an Author and a Publisher in relation to the General Book. With an emphasis on the costable exchanges in such an Agreement, and without going into the nitty-gritty of legal regimes, the following points cover the general economic rationale.

(1) *The Agreement outlines conditions for the sharing of investments and proceeds (particularly profits) between Author and Publisher in producing and disseminating the General Book.* For the purposes of the Agreement, the General Book exists only from the point at which it is spoken of between the two parties and especially from the point at which it is authored (as a proposal, as a work-in-progress, or as a complete manuscript). For the sake of simplicity, let us consider that this Agreement is only from the point at which the General Book exists in material form as a whole. Nevertheless, it is understood that some costable prior factors bear upon the Agreement, even if in unstated ways, especially: the work expended on and therefore the ownership of the pre-contracted General Book by the Author (usually covered by ‘originality’ clauses); the Publisher’s existing infrastructure for materially producing and disseminating the General Book. For both Author and Publisher the Agreement may further be inflected by somewhat intractable considerations of standing and reputation (status and brand).

(2) *The Publisher's investment* – financial outlay – is principally in: enabling a public claim of the quality of the Book's contents (e.g. through assessments by readers and by market experts, by offering the confirmation of its own brand); the material production of the General Book (turning it out as a marketable and consumable item, e.g. printing costs); ensuring the quality of the General Book in the process of production (e.g. copy editing and proof reading, design); complying with legal regulations related to producing and marketing the General Book (e.g. various licensing and registration fees); the distribution of the General Book in the open market (e.g. through agencies and retailers or by its own outlets); publicity and customer liaison (various forms of advertising and raising public awareness of the General Book). 'The open market' is such mainly in principle; in practice the Publisher reserves the prerogative to profile and target the market as it sees fit, but it is considered that the Publisher's and Author's best interests are served by securing the largest realistic market for the General Book. That often means directing the General Book to the largest market that is, so to speak, pre-prepared for or pragmatically available to it.

(3) *The Author's principal investment* is implicit in the existence of the pre-contracted General Book and her possession of it for the purposes of the Agreement. This can be thought of in various costable terms: the time and effort (the work) of writing it, the monies put into being informed enough to write it, etc. The value put on this investment is variable (negotiable) and does not feature explicitly in the Agreement, but it is recognised implicitly in the Agreement through clauses on sharing of proceeds. *The Author's further investments* are stipulated in the Agreement and attach to relatively minor parts in the production process (also work), and consist mainly in responding to assessments of the content of the General Book, contributing to editing and proof reading, and (perhaps) contributing to some aspects of publicity.

(4) *The returns on investments by Author and Publisher are mainly determined in the Agreement by terms of payment: either an upfront payment (a fee) from Publisher to Author at time of Agreement, or a proportional distribution of proceeds from sales of the General Book between Author (in the form of royalties) and Publisher (all profits apart from royalties).* To understand the rationale of the former, some sort of market standard for such upfront payments needs to be considered or consulted. The familiar latter, a royalty arrangement, is more the standard. The proportions of the profits that go to the Author (as royalty payments) and to the Publisher could be regarded as indicative of the weighting of their respective investments – and/or as a weighting according to the risks taken by each in making their investments. There are wide variations here, but the lion's share is usually and understandably the Publisher's by a wide margin. It is difficult to put an indicative figure here: if I said, 10-12% for

the Author, that will seem somewhat beneath average to some Authors and way above average to some Authors, but it gives an immediate sense of proportions. The scale of the proportion is not really material; more important is the fact that it is a *proportion* of profits – so, the Author's return on investment can be understood as proportional to the General Book's performance in the market. The Author's return on investment is, so to speak, market-tested unless an upfront fee is received. The Publisher's share of returns is always dependent upon the General Book's performance in the market.

(5) *As far as the economic rationale of the relationship between authoring and publishing goes, the returns on investment for both Author and Publisher are the key factor to consider.* All other factors – such as matters of reputation, cultural capital, public interest, etc. – are secondary considerations or outside the economic rationale.

With this five-point account of the economic rationale for the standard relationship between authoring and publishing in general before us, it is possible to understand the economic rationale for scholarly authoring and publishing as departing from this standard.

In an immediate way, we could say that the academic researcher's work as author – the Academic Author's work – is now more emphatically to the Scholarly Publisher's advantage, and the Scholarly Publisher's profits from such publishing are therefore more obviously secured, than in the standard and general relationship outlined. Two principal circumstances enable this: first, the Academic Author makes her investment without regard for financial returns (sometimes considerably more investment than authors in general); and second, there is a well-defined and largely closed market (though apparently open in principle or open to an opportunistic degree) available to Scholarly Publishers to secure predictable returns on investment.

The Academic Author's production of Research Monographs is, therefore, very amenable to the entrepreneurial calculations of the Scholarly Publisher, and both parties should be lauded for their entrepreneurial spirit. Of course, the two circumstances which distinguish the specific economic rationale of scholarly authoring and publishing from that of authoring and publishing in general need careful unpacking to clarify this area of entrepreneurial activity.

## 44. The Financial Imprint of the Academic Author's Work

### *Alexander Search*

As far as the Academic Author's (researcher's) work in authoring Research Monographs go, it is entrepreneurial *because* it eschews financial returns from its investment (to an almost unique degree) and becomes available with minimum cost implications for the profit making of the Scholarly Publisher. As observed above, the Academic Author's investment is made without regard for financial returns. This underpins the entrepreneurial advantages of Scholarly Publishing corporations, and indeed other corporations. The latter include, importantly, the entrepreneurial University and Ministry. The Academic Author's entrepreneurialism lies in generating profits for such organisations, but not for herself: we must remember that entrepreneurialism is exercised principally on behalf of organisations and not individuals (on this, see the note on 'the entrepreneur' in I.16, "Two Notes: Public Funding and the Entrepreneur"). Usually it is assumed that individuals are more likely to contribute to an organisation's profit making if they themselves make profits individually by doing so. The Academic Author of Research Monographs, within the parameters described above, presents a contrary example of an individual who contributes to a range of organisations' profit making by denying her own interests.

A few remarks follow below on how the economic rationale of the Academic Author's relation to the Scholarly Publisher's enterprise works, noting along the way where the University and Ministry are implicated (noting but not immediately elaborating) – with the economic rationale apropos of the General Book delineated above in mind.

The following circumstances enable the Academic Author's work to maintain only a faint financial imprint in the Scholarly Publisher's reckonings.

To being with, it is widely accepted by Academic Authors that significant returns on their investment in scholarly publishing do not – and do not need to – come from the Scholarly Publisher. The returns are properly and more materially conferred by their professional employers, mainly the University as far as researchers go. That return could take the form of

simply leading to employment, or leading to a promotion or an increment, and generally feeding an upward career trajectory. In that sense, the University compensates the Academic Author financially in a more meaningful way than the Scholarly Publisher. This may also be encouraged by the Ministry with regard to the University under its jurisdiction. Further, many Academic Authors also consider that their investment is already substantially paid for by the University. Insofar as that work involved expenses in, for instance, a PhD programme, that is substantially recompensed already, before publication of the Research Monograph, by the conferment of a degree (as an accolade and professional qualification, so academic authoring to this extent is actually an act of consuming). Insofar as that involved costs of time, those may already be covered by University employment provisions for study leave and resources and infrastructures for research leading to the Research Monograph. So, again, the University compensates more meaningfully than the Scholarly Publisher, usually through means sanctioned by the Ministry.

Many Academic Authors understand the returns on their investment in non-financial terms: in terms of ‘cultural capital,’ which sounds as good as real capital (see the section on ‘cultural capital’ in II.39, “Modelling as Literary Research”). Often, the returns in terms of reputation, regard and status – especially within the discourse circuits that criss-cross the University – are valued more than financial returns. The University and Ministry facilitate this by setting up rites of recognition which factor in publication, such as promotions, titles, indicators of esteem, high-profile consultation roles, etc. Moreover, as observed variously in Part I, “Panoptic,” in various disciplines Academic Authors have a powerful investment in the public good of research *in terms of benefits and without regard for profits* (the latter is left to academic leaders in the University). They wish to reach the widest possible readership; they usually do not think of readers as consumers but as the public which can be directly or indirectly improved by Research Monographs. The entrepreneurial University and Ministry accept and facilitate such a view by setting up quantitative and qualitative assessments of benefits from research outputs such as Monographs.

Reasonable Academic Authors also recognise the Scholarly Publisher’s role as a service provider rather than simply that of an entrepreneurial corporation. They realise that, given the above circumstances, the Scholarly Publisher receives a great many more publishable Research Monographs than they can publish. The supply of their core product from Academic Authors significantly exceeds demand. They therefore understand that Scholarly Publishers are really providing Academic Authors a service more than offering a pathway to profits. This understanding is emphasised by the role of gate-keeper of academic quality – which benefits the public – that Scholarly Publishers incorporate in their selection processes from the

surfeit of publishable Research Monographs at their disposal. In fact, this means that Academic Authors then aid the Scholarly Publisher's gate-keeping role insofar as that involves other Academic Authors, by acting as peer reviewers for negligible financial rewards. Needless to say, as for any corporation, the Scholarly Publisher's ability to capitalise on Academic Authors' goodwill in this respect depends on cultivating something like an academic reputation for itself (by a market record, by being supported by the University or Ministry).

These circumstances enable the Scholarly Publisher to modify the economic rationale of its relation with the Academic Author for the Research Monograph relative to that which pertains to the Publisher and Author for the General Book. Such modifications are embedded in the Scholarly Publication Agreement (across a limited range of differentials in such agreement), and can be discerned as departures from the standard publication Agreement described in III.43, "Research Work and Scholarly Publishing." The peculiarities of the Scholarly Publication Agreement, thus seen, enable the profit-making interests of the Scholarly Publisher to be maximised and secured with the willing and eager contribution of Academic Authors. Academic Authors are thus (selflessly) entrepreneurial on behalf of Scholarly Publishers.

Those peculiarities of the Scholarly Publishing Agreement are outlined further below.

Naturally, when the Academic Author turns into a Star Academic Author – or simply a Star Author – and especially when she acquires a professional agent most of the circumstances detailed above cease to be relevant. Explicit entrepreneurial calculations on the part of the individual Star Author and her agent are manifest then. Then the economic rationale favours the standard publishing Agreement.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

It occurs to me that Alexander's observations and arguments are strong because he is swimming with the current – or, perhaps in a better image, walking on those treadmills one finds in airports. Any step Alexander takes only adds momentum to the forces already in motion. So, all he needs to do is to select specific areas of academic life that are already rooted in entrepreneurial rationales, however incipiently, and go with their flow. By means of this strategy he not only glosses over determinate parts of literary experience which are not commodified, but also makes oppositional ideas sound idealist, because they appear too distant from the world he describes. Looking back on this debate so far, I realise that my efforts have been in trying, first, to call attention to the fact that the reality he depicts does not correspond (yet) to the way that literature and the

University exist, and, second, that an alternative vision is both possible and intellectually more rewarding.

In dealing with the publishing industry, Alexander is completely at home because this region in the academy is closest to capitalism. However, Alexander now finds himself forced to admit that for many professors financial compensation from research is not the primary end. Could it not be that for these people their desire is elsewhere, not in money, but in the pleasure they derive from reading, writing, discussing and teaching? Also, could we not imagine publishers *in* the University presses as non-profit entities? Perhaps the University is not structured vertically but, rather, horizontally? In his *Akademischer Kapitalismus*, Richard Münch (2011) contrasts Alexander's version of academic competition to an image of academic community, drawn from an earlier model where the principal dividing line is not between prestigious and non-prestigious professors, the stars and the academic rabble, but between those who are accepted within the University and those outside. Recognition here does not come from publishing a lot (often too much), but from the fact that, through the PhD, one has been accepted as a scholar among scholars. To be sure, there are problems with this model as well, but in the present situation these seem much less significant than the ones brought about by the commodification of the University.



## 45. The Scholarly Publishing Agreement (and what's not in it)

### *Alexander Search*

Carrying on where I left off ... The Academic Author's circumstances enables the Scholarly Publisher to make some very reasonable adjustments to the Scholarly Publishing Agreement for a Research Monograph relative to the standard Agreement between Author and Publisher for a General Book (described in III.43, "Research Work and Scholarly Publishing"). These adjustments are fully compliant with the corporate interests of the University and Ministry, and are designed to maximise entrepreneurial incentives for the Scholarly Publisher.

To begin with, insofar as the Academic Author's share of returns from investment relative to the Scholarly Publisher's goes, that can be minimised or nullified or even reversed (i.e. turned into more investment rather than returns). Depending on the ethos of the Scholarly Publisher, a low royalty rate has been conventional – if I say around 5%, that would seem a bit low to some Academic Authors and astronomical to many others if they have encountered a royalty arrangement at all (3%, 1% not unusual).

There are further familiar ways of minimising the Academic Author's returns from her investment in authoring (when not wholly eschewing the possibility of returns). The Scholarly Publishing Agreement may stipulate that royalties would only kick in after the sale of a fixed number of the Research Monograph (e.g. 500 copies): i.e. a number that would guarantee that the Scholarly Publisher realises its financial investment in publication before having to pay the royalty. The Scholarly Publishing Agreement may also simply not offer a royalty and only offer a fee. This fee could reasonably represent some calculation of a usual royalty payment on the average guaranteed sales of such Research Monographs in, say, the first year – this would typically be a small fee since the conventional royalties have been small anyway. This arrangement is a good incentive for the Scholarly Publisher; if, on the off-chance, a Research Monograph does perform extraordinarily well in the market (perhaps even becoming a bestseller) all the proceeds would go to the Scholarly Publisher and none to the Academic Author who has been paid off. (Among large Scholarly

Publishing corporations, Palgrave-Macmillan, or Springer Nature as it has been since 2015, has adopted this model.)

Further, the Scholarly Publishing Agreement may also stipulate that some of the costs of material production of the Research Monograph which have conventionally been the Scholarly Publisher's responsibility could be passed on to the Academic Author. So, for instance, copy editing and proof reading costs could be transferred to the Academic Author, rather than shared. Scholarly Publishing Agreements stipulating that Academic Authors should provide a 'camera-ready copy' are far from uncommon. Again, this depends on the ethos of the Scholarly Publisher, but it makes perfect sense: the Academic Author can generally be trusted to be literate, conversant with academic norms, and desire high-quality production for her Research Monograph. It is standard practice now for Scholarly Publication Agreements to make the costs of indexing, permissions, and sometimes image production the responsibility of Academic Authors.

The possibility, touched upon above, that the Scholarly Publishing Agreement may not offer any return at all (no royalty or fee) for the Academic Author's investment in authoring the Research Monograph, but instead stipulate direct investment from the Academic Author into the production, dissemination and marketing costs, is worth pausing on. This means that the Academic Author effectively takes on costs that define the Publisher's role, and the Scholarly Publisher then becomes predominantly a service provider for the Academic Author – and is fronted mainly as gate keeper for the academic market. This is in the region of self-publishing, but could stop short of being regarded as vanity-publishing especially where reputable Scholarly Publishers are involved, who are known as academic gate keepers. Such Scholarly Publishers are in a position to offer the advantages of their brand, thereby suggesting that the Research Monographs ostensibly published by them are up to scratch. Such Scholarly Publishers also offer the advantages of their existing infrastructure for a coherent production and marketing process. The Scholarly Publishing Agreement may still ensure a (not insignificant) percentage of all proceeds from the sale of the Research Monograph for these services, though the Academic Author who paid the costs may now expect some return from investment (not in authoring the Research Monograph but in bearing the costs of publication). Such direct investment into the production and marketing costs of the Research Monograph by an Academic Author may be (is usually) underwritten by the University or Ministry. It could take the form of a subvention or a publication grant to the Academic Author, and in the Scholarly Publishing Agreement it is still likely to appear as the Academic Author's investment – an investment additional to, or distinct from, her work in authoring the Research Monograph.

All these features of the Scholarly Publishing Agreement are subject to further modifications, to further enhance the Scholarly Publisher's entrepreneurial interests and correspondingly minimise (or erase) the Academic Author's returns on investment in authoring, when what is now regarded as Open-Access Scholarly Publishing is considered. The prevailing idea of Open-Access Publishing is wonderful because it indubitably generates benefits for all and, at the same time, serves the profit making of the Scholarly Publisher and the University and Ministry, and so is indubitably for the public good. Here the Academic Author's selflessness in working to incentivise the entrepreneurial interests of the Scholarly Publisher reaches an admirable pitch of altruism.

Open-Access Scholarly Publishing deserves more sustained attention and I will discuss it separately soon.

There are some implicit factors in the Scholarly Publishing Agreement which underpin the profit-making prospects of Scholarly Publishers *by being tacit and unstated*, by being placed outside discussion between Scholarly Publishers and Academic Authors. These unstated factors are then effectively treated as not of concern to the Academic Author and entirely the prerogative of the Scholarly Publisher. These are, however, worth noting here as relevant to the Scholarly Publishing Agreement as *absences*, because they do in fact affect the Academic Author and silently call for her collaboration – another sort of investment. These unstated factors clarify a further dimension of the Academic Author's selflessness in favour of the enterprise of the Scholarly Publisher, and are rather a critical part of the economic rationale of scholarly publishing.

Apropos of such absences: the Scholarly Publishing Agreement makes no stipulation about the pricing of the Research Monograph in the market, the print run, or the means of publicity. These are understood as being of no concern to the Academic Author and the sole prerogative of the Scholarly Publisher.

The natural tendency for any corporation investing in a product is to first recover costs and realise secure profits by limited production and narrowly targeted marketing to dependable customers. Once that is done to a satisfactory extent, the corporation may then try to maximise profits, particularly if there is some evidence of potential, by taking the risk of larger-scale production and wider marketing. If the secure profits from limited production and marketing are steady enough, and new products of the same type are constantly available so as to repeatedly realise such steady secure profits, then taking the risk of scaled-up production and marketing may seem unnecessary. That would be so even if the potential for greater profits do discernibly exist – at least, quite a lot of evidence of potential will be needed to motivate taking that risk for higher returns. The Scholarly Publisher has powerful entrepreneurial advantages in this

regard. The offer of publishable new Research Monographs from selfless Academic Authors is continuous. A narrow and well-defined market to recover costs and realise secure profits is always available – of two obvious sorts. First, the secure well-defined market is provided by the University and Ministry in the form of libraries with a mandate to stock up-to-date knowledge, i.e. the latest Research Monographs. Second, an outer rung of this secure well-defined market consists in other Academic Authors, especially those working in the same discipline as the one addressed in a Research Monograph. An Academic Author needs to stay in touch with the latest Research Monographs written by others to write her own.

The beauty of these narrow and well-defined markets is that they are dependable, especially so because they are guaranteed to a significant extent by public or at least not-for-profit money (which is to say, money that can become profits for the Scholarly Academic Publisher). This is very appropriate use of public money, following the principles I outlined in I.16, “Two Notes: Public Funding and the Entrepreneur.” To the extent that University- and Ministry-supported libraries receive such money – through government funding, grants from public-spirited foundations and trusts, etc. – they contribute to ensuring recovery of costs and secure margins of profits for Scholarly Publishers. The market of Academic Authors is also significantly based on such money, through salaries and grants. I would not hazard a guess at what percentage of any given pot of public or not-for-profit money finds its way into Scholarly Publishers’ profits from Research Monographs – some intrepid researcher can tease this out. This is all money well-spent and for the public good, i.e. to the purpose of generating profits so that benefits may be distributed from which further profits may be made so that further benefits may become possible ... and so on.

So, it makes good market sense for the Scholarly Publisher to price each Research Monograph high (usually anything from 3-10 times the cost of an equivalent General Book), and have low print runs (as a rule, divide the average print run for the General Book by 5 or 10), and sharply targeted publicity through special catalogues and listings and mailings. Once in a while, a Research Monograph may show signs of being of larger interest than to the well-defined markets alone. If there is sufficient evidence of this, the Scholarly Publisher may push it towards their counterparts (or to specially-tasked units within themselves) to become a General Book – which would mean lower pricing, larger print runs, wider publicity, and a standard publishing Agreement for the no-longer-quite-Academic Author of a no-longer-quite-Research Monograph. This move too is profitable for the Scholarly Publisher.

It is best to keep these market considerations outside the Scholarly Publishing Agreement – to maintain those absences – because these very

reasonable practices nevertheless pose some conundrums for the Academic Author. These do not trouble Academic Authors because financial returns on their investment in authoring are minimised for each author, though they remain satisfactory for the Scholarly Publisher – Academic Authors are already selfless in this regard. But these market practices of the Scholarly Publisher may trouble the Academic Author because they go against the grain of her public-spirited expectations and hoped-for material compensations from other directions, i.e. from the University and Ministry (the kind of compensations and expectations listed in the previous chapter). For one, if the Academic Author wants to distribute benefits to the largest possible part of the (reading) public through her Research Monograph at the expense of profits for herself, that ambition is a bit curtailed. For another, if the Academic Author hopes for financial and ‘cultural capital’ rewards from the University and Ministry – through appointments, promotions, increments, consultancies and the like – those too are affected. Since such rewards are determined by the University and Ministry through competitive processes, both qualitative and quantitative measures of impact and reach play their part. Small sales and circulation figures for a Research Monograph do not sound good, and yet those are the most easily accountable quantitative measures sought by the University and Ministry.

However, in this respect also the Academic Author collaborates selflessly for the entrepreneurial advantage of the Scholarly Publisher – in two somewhat contrary ways. First, she strives to concretise and harden the well-defined market that the Scholarly Publisher focuses on first (or focuses on exclusively) by making sure that the Research Monograph fits it well. She follows disciplinary conventions and discourses which delineate the well-defined market that the Scholarly Publisher will depend on for realising costs and making secure profits. The structure of this market is grounded as much in the University department and faculty as in the Scholarly Publisher’s book listings as in the University library’s catalogue (see the description of disciplines in I.14, “What Literary Researchers Actually Do”). The Scholarly Publisher and University, in distinct ways, design the circumstances of the Academic Author to encourage such concretisation, and the Academic Author generally meets them halfway. Second, at the same time the Academic Author is apt to do everything she is able to provide evidence to the Scholarly Publisher that her Research Monograph might be taken to more risky investment as a General Book, for a wider public. She tries to engineer the evidence that may convince the Scholarly Publisher to publish more copies and put a lower price on it. She tries to secure notice for her Research Monograph for readers who may not ordinarily be targeted by the Scholarly Publisher; she undertakes

active publicity efforts which are conventionally considered to be the publisher's responsibility.

In an interesting way, disciplinarity in academic research – the methods and practices and objectives that broadly convey disciplinary grounding (see I.14, “What Literary Researchers Actually Do”) – is now significantly clarified from this two-fold effort of the selfless Academic Author on behalf of the Scholarly Publisher's enterprise. The *literariness* of literary research (to come back to that) is clarified by the efforts of literary researchers as Academic Authors to define and then redefine, author and then publicise, their Literary Research Monographs for the Scholarly Publisher's entrepreneurial purposes. Various aspects of what literary researchers regard as their disciplinary forte – interpretation, close-reading, contextualizing, theorising, stylistic and narratological analysis – could be understood as grounded here. Observations related to these in Part II, “Knowledge Production: The University,” should be placed in this context.

## 46. Quibbles

*Suman Gupta*

In Alexander's account of the Scholarly Publishing Agreement, I can see the economic logic that joins the Academic Author with the Scholarly Publisher, and (somewhat mysteriously) with the University and Ministry. I shall consider the logical coherence of this argument carefully, but I have a few quibbles to raise before that.

There is an implicit time-line in Alexander's argument, which suggests that the kind of Scholarly Publishing Agreement he is describing evolved over a specific period. He uses phrases that demarcate periods, such as 'conventionally,' 'that used to be or have been the responsibility of publishers,' 'recently,' 'now.' I would like some markers to be put as to when a different sort of Scholarly Publishing Agreement existed and when particular modifications have taken place.

Further, though Alexander's account of the logic of particular clauses or calculations in the Scholarly Publishing Agreement seems sound, this does not mean that they are actually employed. Articulating the rationale does not mean that it is acted upon by any of the parties. Is there evidence of the actual use of the stipulations and calculations that Alexander mentions? For instance, are there records of such decisions being planned by a Scholarly Publisher, University or Ministry; reference to accounts which show that the patterns of investments and returns Alexander speaks of; etc.?

Finally, Alexander's reasoning is based on print publication of Research Monographs – he speaks of pricing, costs of material production, print-runs and suchlike. But surely these are a bit in the past now, in the age of electronic and open-access publication?

*Alexander Search*

In response to Suman's quibbles, let me say first of all that my observations are not inferences made in the researcher's way. I have not collected evidence, organised and consulted it, and made inferences in a systematic fashion to come up with these observations. What I am presenting here is something like 'insider knowledge.' It is based on experience over a period

from roughly 1995 to 2015. The implicit past in my argument is broadly as things were in 1995; the present in focus here is as it has been since 2015. I cannot be more definite immediately in breaking down phases and demarcating shifts chronologically. This is largely because these changes have occurred unevenly, at different times in different parts of the Scholarly Publishing sector, with different lags in response to economic and technological developments and policy pushes, to different degrees in various contexts. But twenty years is a sufficiently compressed period for the rationale in question to be understood as unfolding coherently. It might be possible to break down phases by focusing on one or two significant publishing corporations, and homing in on particular policy records and accounts disclosures. This is easily done insofar as such evidence is in the public domain. Much of it is not and is not easily accessible to researchers. Often, and understandably, Academic Authors, Scholarly Publishing corporations, and others involved are reluctant to reveal what they consider market-sensitive information.

These observations then are not meant to persuade by the weight of sources and evidence. However, they may be corroborated or refuted by other ‘insiders’ – those with experience of scholarly publishing in some capacity. These are offered for corroboration or refuting, not as definite truth claims for the uninitiated. As Academic Authors, Suman and Fabio may have a view on the extent to which these observations coincide with their experience.

Finally, Suman is right that e-publication and the digital environment make a significant difference to the economic rationale, and I will address it next. It is significant, but does not, I think, transform the principles of the economic rationale in question as fundamentally as is often thought.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

I find Alexander’s description of the Scholarly Publishing Agreement quite accurate. Even though concrete data would surely be welcome, it could take us to too far afield. It would either have to be acquired through qualitative research, focusing on a couple of presses, or quantitative research, presenting a broad overview of many presses. In either case, I believe, the result would only confirm the tendency Alexander has witnessed, and which I corroborate.

Scholarly Publishers insert and accommodate themselves in the space occupied by something that Alexander has not dwelled upon here, under the name of ‘culture,’ ‘instruction,’ ‘knowledge,’ ‘cultivation,’ ‘pleasure,’ etc. These are all values attached to what the humanities should be promoting. In the applied sciences patents are directly related to profit making, but even in fields such as engineering the University provides



work that is incorporated for free into several industries, and not only publishing. For some time now, funding agencies have institutionalised this transfer. In Brazil, for instance, the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) has a specific line of funding that gives PhD scholarships and grants for University researchers to work on problems faced by industry. State money is then directly used to increase private profit, in the hope that profit will be reinvested or spent in the state of São Paulo.

But to come back to the humanities, and to literary studies particularly, the Scholarly Publisher thrives on literature's claim of being a civilizing force, of being something that will make people better. This humanist belief acts as a seal that allows the state to fund literary studies and parents to pay for their children's education. In other words, it is culture's claim of being something above and beyond the mere reproduction of everyday life that allows it to be swallowed in (very good) business. There is something of a cul-de-sac here, because if culture becomes totally devoid of this claim, it really has no reason to exist, since it does not fulfil any particular need. It makes no sense to spend so many hours reading books, if they are not supposed to offer one insights into the world, life, experience, etc. Deprived of that, literary studies become no more than a toing and froing of arguments. It is a tough choice between, on the one hand, believing in the exceptionality of culture and thereby allowing it to be exploited, and, on the other, demystifying it and draining it of any interest.

It is possible that there is something structural about the view of culture as something transcending self-interest and sheer exchange. The valorisation of literature and the arts as activities transcending the mere reproduction of everyday life acts both as a counterforce and a compensation for the total rule of the market. This could explain why it is the case that in poor societies culture is very often invested with more intrinsic value than in rich countries.

## 47. Scholarly E-Publishing and Open Access

### *Alexander Search*

For the time being, I will largely stick to the Research Monograph as my focal point, though much of what follows is currently more settled for the Research Journal Paper – but the situation there can be summarised fairly quickly later. The Research Monograph poses particular pressures in publishing that clarify the situation for Research Journal Papers.

The observations below remain anchored to the economic rationale of the relationship between the Academic Author and the Scholarly Publisher, University and Ministry; that is, to the Academic Author's part within entrepreneurial calculations.

In terms of this economic rationale, the considerations attached to e-publishing are fairly straightforward. In digital formats books can be produced to market standards and replicated at low cost. Given the widening reach and waning costs of accessing the internet, books can be distributed and accessed widely with small outlays. The *raison d'être* for the publishing corporation's apparatus for material production and dissemination (marketing) of books seems to be on the verge of disappearing. In fact, for a while in the early 2000s, these developments were regarded as a threat to the book publishing and retailing industries at large. Their imminent doom was often pronounced.

Since the Academic Author in particular, and to some extent the University and Ministry, claim a normative responsibility for disseminating the benefits of research as widely as possible, even at the expense of profits, the profit-making role of the Scholarly Publisher now seems dispensable. In principle, now the Academic Author, with the support of the University and Ministry, could maximise the public benefits of research efficiently and at low cost. For instance, e-published Research Monographs could be made openly accessible through internet platforms (i.e. Open-Access Publishing) maintained by Academic-Author collectives and the University, without any financial input being called for from the Scholarly Publisher. Such a step would not bring any returns on the Academic Author's investment in authoring, but the Academic Author is already accustomed to that in the print environment. And such a move could be rendered sustainable with the support of the University and

Ministry – simply by their maintaining the circumstances (outlined in III.44, “The Financial Imprint of the Academic Author’s Work”) whereby the Academic Author is already motivated to be selfless in terms of financial expectations from authoring. Now, for instance, the University could make a small one-off investment in putting up an internet platform for open and publicly accessible Research Monographs, and Academic-Author collectives (e.g. disciplinary associations, learned societies) could undertake gatekeeping, i.e. ensuring academic quality – all of which could be resourced cheaply from human resources within the University. So, the *raison d’être* of the Scholarly Publisher’s existence becomes particularly questionable, and the idea of Open-Access Publishing seems in the first instance to be counter to its survival. Indeed, in the early 2000s it was observed that Open-Access Publication was proving popular with the Academic Author and the University, and the death-knell of the Scholarly Publisher appeared to be ringing.

However, the entrepreneurial interests of the Scholarly Publisher are understandably largely shared by the University and Ministry and by the selfless Academic Author. Despite the latter’s desire for maximising benefits through Open-Access Publishing, they know that the public good cannot be served merely by generating benefits without also enabling profits (as observed in I.6, “Research for the Public Good”). It becomes apparent that the idea of Open-Access Publishing and its benefit generation need to be designed so that the profit-making motivations of the Scholarly Publisher, and indeed those of the University and Ministry, can be maintained and preferably enhanced.

This means adjusting the economic relationship between the Academic Author and Scholarly Publisher through really quite significant modifications in the Scholarly e-Publishing Agreement relative to the Scholarly Publishing Agreement (delineated in III.45 above). Such modifications are necessarily attended by some changes within the infrastructure of the Scholarly Publisher. The process can be conceived as taking place in three steps.

#### *Step One*

It is first necessary for the Scholarly Publisher to delink the pragmatics of e-publishing from any *necessary* association with Open-Access Publishing (in fact, this is in the interest of the publishing sector generally). The e-published Research Monograph, in the first instance, has to be made to behave like the print Research Monograph. Then the e-published Research Monograph could remain subject to the same kind of Scholarly Publishing Agreement as the print-published. The principal behavioural difference between e-publication and print-publication which disadvantages the Scholarly Publisher’s enterprise is that the former allows easy replication

and therefore uncontrolled access. The main material difference between e-publication and print-publication which could be advantageous for the Scholarly Publisher is the low production and distribution cost of the former. If the e-published Research Monograph could be made to behave like a print-published Research Monograph in terms of replication and control of access, and if at the same time its low production and distribution costs could be capitalised on, then the Scholarly Publisher's profit margin can be raised higher for e-publication than for print.

This means that Scholarly Publishers need to make an infrastructural investment in securing e-published copies of Research Monographs against replication: for instance, by inserting locks in existing e-publication products, designing new and controlled e-publishing programmes and platforms, making e-publication products accessible on specific devices. Then, substantially the same Scholarly Publishing Agreement and marketing practices could be maintained for e-published Research Monographs as for print. Given the lower material production and distribution costs (print-runs are now immaterial), and given continuing high-pricing of e-published Research Monographs and low or no returns for the Academic Author's investment in authoring, profit margins for the Scholarly Publisher could be expected to rise.

The main vulnerability in this step for the Scholarly Publisher is that the checks introduced on reproduction and control of access of the e-published Research Monograph might become less effective, so that a pirate e-market of books (or 'pirate cooperatives' of books, if that can be conceived) may emerge which is more efficient than the traditional pirate print-market. One of the ways to address this is for the Scholarly Publisher to collaborate with the Ministry to introduce stronger policing of and stiffer penalties for pirating in the electronic environment, in the interests of enterprise.

### *Step Two*

Once Step One is accomplished to a necessary degree, so that e-publishing becomes delinked from any necessary association with Open-Access Publishing, it is possible for the Scholarly Publisher to then call upon the technology of e-publishing to offer controlled Open-Access Publishing.

That would only make entrepreneurial sense if the Scholarly Publisher's usual profit-margin is maintained (if not bettered) for production which is Open Access. To this end, a key modification is necessary in the Scholarly e-Publishing Agreement relative to the Scholarly Publishing Agreement: *the Academic Author now must become the sole financial investor in the production process of the Research Monograph insofar as it is put to Open-Access Publishing. This financial investment must take place on the understanding that there will be no returns (royalty or fee) from the Academic Author's investment in authoring because there will*

*be no accountable profits; however, the Scholarly Publisher will now act as a pure service provider whose profits are made from the Academic Author's financial investment.* The economic rationale of the relationship between the Academic Author and Scholarly Publisher is now thus: the Academic Author is a consumer of the Scholarly Publisher's services, guaranteeing the latter's profits in advance of production. The Academic Author and Scholarly Publisher are no longer sharing investments and returns from the publication of the Research Monograph in any ratio, as they conventionally used to for the print Research Monograph. So, with regard to Open-Access Publishing, the Academic Author is no longer a more or less selfless investor supporting the Scholarly Publisher's entrepreneurial interests but a customer from whom the Scholarly Publisher realises profits. This is a very sensible arrangement since the Academic Author, of her own accord and with the encouragement of the University and Ministry, has the strongest stake in her Research Monograph generating benefits.

### *Step Three*

Several moves need to happen coincidentally with Step Two to render Open-Access Publishing in line with this model of the Scholarly e-Publishing Agreement functional.

First, in principle the Academic Author may be held financially responsible as sole investor in Open-Access Publishing of her Research Monograph, but in practice she may simply not have the means or will to make this investment. So long as the principle of Academic Author as sole investor is maintained, the practice can be managed with the support of the University and Ministry – which, in any case, provide the compensations that enable the selfless contribution of Academic Authors to the Scholarly Publisher's entrepreneurial interests. The University and Ministry can now help the Academic Author to make this financial investment for Open-Access Publishing in the form of selective allocation of grants for the purpose, for which the Academic Author would need to bid (another level of investment). In offering these grants the University and Ministry can depend on public or not-for-profit funding to the advantage of the enterprise of the Scholarly Publisher; the University and Ministry can also offset those against savings from library infrastructure costs that e-publishing enables. By keeping the Academic Author as the financially responsible party in the Scholarly e-Publishing Agreement even if the money actually comes from the University or Ministry, the latter can disavow any direct responsibility or liability for the consequences of the investment. They may also withdraw the option of offering grants from Academic Authors when necessary (e.g. when Scholarly Publishers feel it is not needed for their enterprise).

Two, since the Scholarly Publisher's financial investment in material costs are reduced in e-publishing, and the Academic Author's investment appears now as a customer's to a service provider, some renewed clarification and validation of the Scholarly Publisher's role becomes necessary. This typically involves the Scholarly Publisher making an infrastructural investment in high-visibility platforms for Open-Access Publications (i.e. offering a publicity and benefit-distribution advantage), and upping its brand-conferred claim of gatekeeping in the service of academic quality. In strengthening the Scholarly Publisher's gatekeeping claim, the University and Ministry may again be called upon via the Academic Author. They could formally validate and officially promote this brand-led claim of academic quality in various ways.

In brief, the Academic Author whose Research Monograph is published Open Access by a Scholarly Publisher thus becomes more central than ever to the entrepreneurial interests of the latter, as direct financial investor and consumer. This arrangement is easily aligned with the corporate interests of the University and Ministry. Some details of cost-implications and policies in this regard could clarify the above observations further. I will attempt clarification of that sort next, principally with developments in the UK in view. The UK context is not particularly different from others. It is useful to have a specific context in view since this is a developing area of enterprise, with as yet fluid contours.

## 48. The Enterprise of Open Access Research Monographs

*Alexander Search*

The main difference between the Research Monograph and the Research Journal Paper, apart from length, is that the latter comes with a negligible sense of pre-contractual ownership by the Academic Author. For the Research Monograph, however, the Academic Author's conviction in pre-contractual ownership is strong. So, the Scholarly Publisher has to take it into account in the Scholarly Publishing Agreement. For the Research Journal Paper, the Academic Author's sense of pre-contractual ownership is weak enough to render the relevant Scholarly Publishing Agreement more or less perfunctory.

There are several obvious reasons for this. Research Journals were generally historically established with secure subsidies from the University and from professional and scholarly bodies, with clearly articulated benefits and without profit-making considerations. From their inception, therefore, Academic Authors have foregone any expectation of returns on investment in authoring. So, no historical memory of returns (royalties or fees) for Academic Authors needed to be taken on board when those subsidies were withdrawn and necessary measures for making Research Journals profitable were undertaken. This usually involved aligning Research Journals with the entrepreneurial arrangements of the Scholarly Publisher. Where the Scholarly Publisher was a subsidiary of the University and professional bodies, through and since the 1990s the Scholarly Publisher was increasingly liberated from the direct financial control of the University and professional bodies (became autonomous and self-funding). They then had to find ways of making Research Journals profitable, and it was useful that Academic Authors already had no expectation of returns from authoring. In other instances, the Scholarly Publisher was already established as a private corporation, with robust profit-making systems in place, and was therefore equipped to move into profitable Research Journal publishing (now freed of any inconvenient benefits-centred subsidies). Academic Authors understood that this move is necessary since benefits and profits work jointly towards the public good.

An Academic Author's ownership of a specific Research Journal Paper is also considerably diluted by the character of the Research Journal. The editors, reviewers and other contributors play a shared and substantial part in its design and contents. That correspondingly diminishes any individual Academic Author's claim to ownership. For some disciplines, especially those where research is a group endeavour, each Research Journal Paper is itself a collaborative (co-authored) exercise reflecting group work. Again, this circumstance dilutes any individual Academic Author's sense of ownership. Moreover, to enhance the profit-making potential of post-subsidy Research Journal publishing, the University and Ministry have tended to put growing weight on the salience of the Research Journal Paper at the expense of the Research Monograph. Despite the Research Journal Paper's brevity, and the collective input that characterises its publication, individual Academic Authors increasingly find that being recognised formally as sole or part author of such a publication serves their careers well. For an Academic Author a Research Journal Paper could be more rewarding career-wise for less individual investment in authoring than a Research Monograph.

All this has meant that for the Scholarly Publisher, University and Ministry, entrepreneurial strategies centred on the Research Journal Paper have been easy to manage vis-à-vis Academic Authors. In production and as product the Research Journal Paper is intrinsically corporate in nature and less grounded in authorship. So, when it comes to capitalising on the advantages and negotiating the disadvantages of e-publication and Open-Access Publishing, Scholarly Publishers have a greater degree of flexibility with regard to Research Journal Papers. In fact, in the e-publishing environment Research Journals are particularly profitable for the Scholarly Publisher, and their Academic Authors are especially selflessly entrepreneurial, while continuing to offer clearly articulated benefits.

But the distinct mechanics of publishing the Research Journal Paper calls for separate consideration (see below, III.54, "The End of the Research Monograph"). Let me get back to the Research Monograph. That brief digression on the Research Journal Paper has a point. The place of the Academic Author in the economic rationale of Scholarly Publishing there is not entirely wiped out, but it is very much less germane than with regard to the Research Monograph. The Academic Author of the Research Monograph as an entrepreneurial entity in the economic rationale of Scholarly Publishing, as an investing or consuming party to Scholarly Publishing Agreements, is more determinate. From an entrepreneurial literary researcher's perspective, both the practice of authoring Research Monographs and the concept of authoring involved in being an Academic Author are of particular interest (on this, see III.50, "Literary Author and Academic Author," below).



With regard to the Research Journal Paper, the calculations of profit making and benefit generation via Open-Access Publishing have already been collaboratively worked out by the Scholarly Publisher, University and Ministry. However, that is still being worked out with regard to the Research Monograph. Roughly since 2010, policy directives concerning Open-Access Publishing of Research Journal Papers by the Ministry – following ‘consultations’ – indicate the arrangements for benefits and profits that are now in place. These enjoin various levels of compulsion on the Academic Author to publish Research Journal Papers arising from publicly-funded research for Open Access. In principle (in legal terms), the Academic Author makes the financial investment for Open-Access Publishing where that involves the Scholarly Publisher, usually backed in practice by grants from the University, Ministry and other funders. Accordingly, in Britain the recommendations of the Finch Report (2012), *Accessibility, Sustainability, Excellence*, have largely been implemented. In the USA the Holdren Memo (2013), *Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research*, also went through several phases of implementation under the Barack Obama presidency. Similar policies have been adopted and are being implemented in most European Union countries, Australia and elsewhere.

Policy directives and collaboration designed to release the entrepreneurial energies of Open-Access Publication are thus easily extended to Research Journal Papers but have to be more circumspect about being extended to Research Monographs. This is principally because the sense of pre-contractual ownership by the Academic Author is stronger, and consequently the status of the Academic Author as a financial agent in the economic rationale of scholarly publishing needs to be thought through. For instance, in the UK compulsion towards Open-Access Publishing of research outputs has been operated through the periodic national-level assessments of research production in the University (the so-called Research Excellence Framework or REF exercise): for the 2021 REF exercise Open-Access Publishing of Research Journal Papers has been made compulsory, but that is not the case for Research Monographs.

But the possibility of bringing compulsion to bear on the Academic Author to put the Research Monograph to Open-Access Publishing, and moreover to bear formal financial liability for doing so, is being energetically thought through. The idea now is to work out how the Research Monograph can be brought to Open-Access Publishing in a way that realises profits for concerned corporations – especially the Scholarly Publisher and University – without disturbing the obvious benefits for all via the Academic Author. Insofar as the situation in the UK goes, the direction of thinking here is laid out in investigative reports on this issue, such as Geoffrey Crossick’s (2015) report for HEFCE, *Monographs and*

*Open Access*, and the OAPEN-UK (2016) final report, *A Five-Year Study into Open Access Monograph Publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. These reports indicate how the profits and benefits of Open-Access Publishing of Research Monographs may be systematised and rendered compulsory for publicly-funded research. The indications they offer are limited by the evidence cited. Regretfully they *do not give financial data or detail financial models*, though those are mentioned. But they do draw upon a range of evidence from key stakeholders, including Academic Authors and Scholarly Publishers – in essence, *attitude and opinion surveys* (gathered through focus groups, questionnaires, workshops, etc.). In following the form of Corporate Research Reports (cf. II.20, “Corporate Research and Academic Research”) these are then more for the purpose of managing public, especially academic, perceptions and trying to ensure compliance than for informing their commissioning parties (the University, Ministry, Scholarly Publisher, etc.).

Crossick’s (2015) HEFCE report implicitly wonders whether Research Monographs are needed any longer at all, and finds that Academic Authors in the Humanities and Social Sciences do find them valuable (often more so than Research Journal Papers). Of especial interest here, what comes through in both these reports is a profile of the attitudes of Academic Authors as, ultimately, the producers of Research Monographs and parties to the Scholarly Publishing Agreement. It is usefully confirmed that they are not only selfless entrepreneurs for their Scholarly Publisher and University, but are amenable to becoming in-principle financial investors and consumers to aid profit making along with benefit generation. This is very good news, clearly revealing the entrepreneurial potential of the Academic Author in an e-publishing and Open-Access Publishing environment. So, the OAPEN-UK (2016) final report presents the profile of the Academic Author thus:

Placing a book is not a decision that most authors take lightly. Their priorities when selecting a publisher relate to quality assurance, dissemination and standing in their field.

Researchers expect publishers to share their concern for their book. They have high expectations of their publisher and those expectations are usually met. Often researchers feel their books are improved by going through the publishing process. But there are also areas of disappointment, especially around marketing and promotion of books and reaching important audiences, including reviewers, and sometimes believe their publishers underperform here. This is important, as most authors do not want to take on marketing and promotion themselves. They are also keen to understand the performance of their books, and see better usage information as a possible advantage of open access. Across the board, researchers want to see core publisher functions protected in an open access world, they are often

sympathetic to publishers who are seeking to maintain excellent service in the face of reducing profitability of books, especially where they participate in publishing as reviewers or editors.

In most of our initial focus groups and throughout the project royalties appear as an important issue, but attitudes are not clear cut. Our survey work suggests that most authors do not prioritise royalties but the author interviews, although small in number, present a more nuanced view. Many researchers have a realistic understanding of the likely performance of their book. Royalties will not be important for a niche monograph but for a work with potential to become a core reading list text or to cross over into the trade market they are a bigger issue. Researchers seem happy to give up their royalties in the pursuit of open access as long as publishers will do the same with their profits – this probably aligns with the view, expressed by a majority of respondents to our 2012 survey, that publisher profits should go back to supporting their disciplines. Publishers and authors recognise that open access may not be appropriate for every monograph publication. (OAPEN-UK 2016: 17-9)

The quotation is a bit long but covers a lot of ground. In brief, the OAPEN-UK (2016) report presents the Scholarly Publisher as a service provider, the Academic Author as generally selfless in economic terms, and therefore friendly consumers of the Scholarly Publisher's services, amenable towards being nudged to invest in Open-Access Publishing. These are consumer-survey reports, which both describe the consumers and persuade them to become investors.

With the kind of support from the University and Ministry that these reports represent, Scholarly Publishers have naturally already started capitalising on the entrepreneurial possibilities of Open-Access Publishing for Research Monographs. They provide services for Academic Authors to have their Research Monographs published under their brands with the kind of Scholarly e-Publishing Agreement outlined above (in Steps Two and Three of III.47, "Scholarly E-Publishing and Open Access"). The Academic Author's selfless entrepreneurialism is converted in such agreements to featuring as a financial investor putting in the monies for Open-Access Publishing. Irrespective of where the monies come from, the Academic Author is liable for providing this in the agreement.

The cost implications for the Academic Author as signatories of such agreements might be of interest here. In 2016, the following figures (not including taxes) were available from some UK- and US-based publishers for Research Monographs to be published as Open Access (some prefer not to name costs, which they regard as conditional on the Academic Author's means and the proportions of the Research Monograph) – the website details appear at the end of this chapter:

- Cambridge University Press: £6500 (\$10,000 or €9000) for a work of up to 120,000 words, and £1600 per additional 30,000 words. Illustrated works incur a charge of £25 per figure.
- Manchester University Press: £9850 for up to 120,000 words, including 20 images.
- Palgrave-Macmillan (Springer Nature): £11,000 / \$17,000.
- Open Books (specialist non-commercial Open-Access Publishers): 'It typically costs £3,500 to produce and market a book. [...] We provide information on possible sources of publishing grants for Open Access books and support our authors throughout the application process.'
- Routledge: £10,000.
- Ubiquity Press (specialist Open-Access Publishers): Core service with typesetting and copy-editing £3210 for up to 30,000 words, £5050 for 100,000 words, £7550 for 200,000 words.
- University of California Press (Luminos): 'The baseline Title Publication Fee is \$15,000. A significant portion of these costs will be covered by UC Press, library partners who participate in this program, and print sales. [...] The author will be asked to secure funding to cover \$7,500 of the Title Publication Fee.'

Scholarly Publishers also give explanations for how they calculate costs. Palgrave-Macmillan/Springer Nature explains:

The level of the publication charge, which in many cases we envisage being met by funders, has been calculated by looking at all costs involved in our publishing process, from editorial to production, marketing, dissemination, and supporting discoverability. It reflects the fact that content published via Palgrave Open will be subject to the same rigorous professional process as all other Palgrave Macmillan publications. It also reflects our use of the CC BY license (Creative Commons Attribution v4.0 International License) as the default for our open access books.

Routledge explains:

We have calculated the figure based on our own experience of the normal costs involved in the publishing process including editorial, production, marketing, sales, IT and distribution as well as taking account of the revenue that we would forego by making the book available open access.

All include therein the costs of academic gatekeeping through rigorous peer review, so that effectively Academic Authors pay the costs of gate-

keeping by other Academic Authors with the mediation of Scholarly Publishers.

Scholarly Publishers in the UK anticipate that this business will pick up as the Ministry will make Open-Access Publication of Research Monographs compulsory too for future REF exercises. In the OAPEN-UK (2016) project mentioned above, some Scholarly Publishers participated by making a random selection of their existing Research Monographs Open Access for a given period and tracking reading figures. Some did this without obtaining the permission of the relevant Academic Author to do so, and sought such permission retrospectively (presumably because unreasonable Academic Authors might feel that possible royalties according to their existing Scholarly Publication Agreements were thereby adversely affected). In seeking this permission retrospectively from one such Academic Author, a Scholarly Publisher observed:

Open Access has, as I am sure you are aware, become more commonplace and from this year on will be mandated for journal articles submitted to the REF. Where research has been funded by either UK or European public research money outputs will also be required to be made Open Access. Although the mandate does not extend to books for the REF in this round, it is expected to do so in the one following 2020/21. Obviously your book above is not subject to these mandates, but I am mentioning this only to illustrate that there is a strong movement towards making scholarly works free at the point of use [...]. Going forward [we are] working with a number of research funders as we sort out the technical issues around Open Access. It's still a difficult landscape to navigate, but with usage figures like those for your book and increasing threats to our sales models from declining library budgets and mass piracy, there is no question that high-quality research will increasingly be published Open Access as a matter of course.

It seems likely that Scholarly Publishers are lobbying the University and Ministry for a move towards greater compulsion on Academic Authors towards Open-Access Scholarly e-Publication of their Research Monographs along the lines outlined above (in Steps Two and Three of III.47, "Scholarly E-Publishing and Open Access"). The profits and benefits of doing so for the Scholarly Publisher, and of course for the public good, are becoming clear.

#### *Websites referred*

Cambridge University Press  
<http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/cambridge-open-access/gold-open-access-books>

Manchester University Press

<http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/openmonographs/>

Palgrave-Macmillan (Springer Nature)

<http://www.nature.com/openresearch/publishing-with-palgrave-macmillan/publication-charges/>

Open Books

<http://www.openbookpublishers.com/section/6/1/information-for-authors/f5623e05cf55ae089dff8ad76c9c457>

Routledge

[https://www.routledge.com/info/open\\_access/faq#charges](https://www.routledge.com/info/open_access/faq#charges)

Ubiquity Press

<http://www.ubiquitypress.com/site/publish/>

University of California Press (Luminos):

<http://www.luminosoa.org/site/faqs/>

### ***Suman Gupta***

A small point: I paused on Alexander's description of the reports here, of Crossick (2015) and OAPEN-UK (2016) – his description of the kind of evidence they present. He says they do not give economic data or detail financial models, they mainly use 'attitude and opinion surveys.' That means, if I understand this correctly, that they actually do not draw attention to the kind of economic rationale Alexander is talking about; on the contrary, they try to distract attention from that by withholding information. These reports fudge the economic rationale. Instead, they focus on opinions and attitudes: some kind of gauging of majority perspectives, however ill-informed or misinformed those perspectives might be. Their thrust is: 'we have to take account of the opinions and attitudes of majorities, but without informing them of the financial considerations clearly; then we can present or phrase the financial model we want so that it doesn't seem to contradict those majority views.' This seems to be a typical confidence trick, a spin; it is a standard manoeuvre of publicists in majoritarian democracy. These documents then are not really 'reports' in the sense of presenting a disinterested picture, these are really attitude-management strategies disguised as 'reports' (calling them 'reports' is part of the attitude-management strategy).

## 49. On Retailers and Other Issues

*Fabio Akcelrud Durão*

Let me begin with three points in Alexander's account of e-publication and Open-Access Publication which I would like to comment on.

The first one Alexander has already suggested, but I think it deserves emphasis: namely, how the selflessly entrepreneurial Academic Author may see herself as a one-person quasi-corporation. Perhaps if Alexander had focused on her point of view the argument would become more compelling. Her investment (of time, energy and resources) without apparent direct return can be justified from what she will receive in terms of employment, self-gratification and the like; there is an underlying (bad) rationality to submitting oneself to such exploitation.

The second point relates to the role of competition in the University. Outsiders might find it difficult to understand why professors (especially with tenure) still publish e-books through for-profit Scholarly Publishers, as opposed to free self-publication. (As a rule now, paper and e-book are published together.) There is a group-logic at work here: because nobody wants to be the first to relinquish Scholarly Publishers for fear of losing prestige. But since prestige is conferred by the community itself, what this situation reveals is the isolation and competitiveness of academics.

Finally, the third point concerns the decreasing importance of the University in society and even in the self-representation of professors. The fact that in the digital world the University should relinquish its role of gatekeeping in favour of for-profit Scholarly Publishers would sound absurd to earlier generations of intellectuals. Presses had their *raison d'être* in the expertise they brought to the production of the book as a physical object; when this knowhow is no longer necessary, there is no justification for the University to get involved in supporting profit-making publication by the Scholarly Publisher.

The picture of Scholarly Publishing of the Research Monograph that Alexander has drawn above could be developed further by inserting the role played by wholesale retailers, who take the lion's share of profits (Amazon's rate may reach 50% of a book's cover price). The incorporation of self-publishing within their systems is worthy of mention. Here's a quotation from an editorial of the magazine *n+1* (2013) on this:

We've reached the point at which the CEO of Amazon, a giant corporation, in his attempt to integrate bookselling and book production, has perfectly adapted the language of a critique of the cultural sphere that views any claim to 'expertise' as a mere mask of prejudice, class, and cultural privilege. Writing in praise of his self-publishing initiative, Jeff Bezos notes that 'even well-meaning gatekeepers slow innovation. . . . Authors that might have been rejected by establishment publishing channels now get their chance in the marketplace. Take a look at the Kindle bestseller list and compare it to the New York Times bestseller list – which is more diverse?' Bezos isn't talking about Samuel Delany; he's adopting the sociological analysis of cultural capital and appeals to diversity to validate the commercial success of books like *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a badly written fantasy of a young woman liberated from her modern freedom through erotic domination by a rich, powerful male. Publishers have responded by reducing the number of their own 'well-meaning gatekeepers,' actual editors actually editing books, since quality or standards are deemed less important than a work's potential appeal to various communities of readers.

On a different note, it is interesting to see how Research Journals and Monographs compete with each other. If a researcher publishes several articles on a certain topic, she will have difficulty turning them into a book, because they will be economically not so profitable. Also, the article-form is favoured by scientists and administrators generally, because they are easier to measure. There is much to say about these developments in formal terms, in relation to how it facilitates the salami-slicing of arguments, how it adapts better to theoretical fashions, etc. It is worth considering whether Research Monographs are intrinsically more adequate to the field of literary studies than Research Papers. I feel they are, while at the same time noticing that, at least here in Brazil, the full-blown 200+ page long Research Monograph is disappearing. It is being replaced by collections of articles from one Academic Author or by edited works comprising contributions from several Academic Authors.



## 50. Literary Author and Academic Author

*Suman Gupta*

I do not have ‘academic publishing’ listed under Research Interests in my CV; I do not know whether Alexander’s account of the economic relationship between the Scholarly Publisher and Academic Author is accurate. Insofar as my own experience goes, much of the rationale Alexander lays out rings true. And, I must admit, I fit the profile of the Academic Author quoted from the OAPEN-UK (2016) final report in III.48, “The Enterprise of Open Access Research Monographs,” uncomfortably closely.

But I will not try to verify Alexander’s account here. Instead, I make some conceptual inferences on the assumption that it is accurate, from the perspective of a literary researcher (this is in my CV). Literary researchers think about the nuances of authorship quite a lot, and not just of authorship for so-called literary texts. Various concepts of authorship in general are familiar territory for us. From that vantage point the construction of the Academic Author in terms of the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing, in Alexander’s terms, presents some fascinating conundrums.

Within this rationale, the *selfless entrepreneurialism* of the Academic Author of the Research Monograph is a kind of chimera. The Academic Author can be turned into any kind of economic agent: a worker/inventor authoring monographs; an entrepreneurial partner partaking of returns from publishing; a publicist and type-setter; a fund raiser and financial investor in the Open-Access Publishing cycle; a consumer of the services of Scholarly Publishers; an altruist for the public good; a legal person with liability for that which is not her property. She is sometimes owned by the University and Ministry and sometimes by the Scholarly Publisher, in a coherent and yet disjunctive pattern. And yet, all this is only possible because she is *nothing* in entrepreneurial terms, an empty signifier to be deployed according to the convenience of corporations and the state. ‘Selfless entrepreneurialism’ is a very interesting phrase. Can any ‘self’ be recognised in entrepreneurial discourse – within the economic rationality of enterprise – which is not *homo economicus*, a self-interested economic person? To be a ‘selfless entrepreneur’ on behalf of corporations is to be, within entrepreneurial discourse, a dependable sucker or a happy fool (with formal status, so the Fool). A dependable sucker is the opposite of

*homo economicus*: the empty signifier that can be adjusted or stretched or bent to smooth over whatever contradiction appears in entrepreneurial rationales and that nevertheless appears to be something or someone.

As I was working through Alexander's account of the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing, I was trying to find my feet in terms of concepts of authorship which are familiar to literary researchers. There is a certain similarity in drift between the Academic Author in entrepreneurial discourse and the Author (generally) in literary critical theory. Much discussion of the latter has revolved around the chimerical character of the Author. Several obvious nodes of literary debate come to mind, and they are mostly about interrogating significations of the Author, of authorship.

The received concept of the Author, which is going strong, is as follows: the finished text (to whatever extent finished) originates in the Author, represents the effort (work) of the Author, and expresses the insights and sensibility of the Author. The New Critical turn in the mid twentieth century briefly displaced this concept of the Author by focusing on the text-in-itself, by studiously discounting the presumption that an authorial intent is discernible in the text – most clearly announced in W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley's (1946) 'intentional fallacy.' A distinct move in decentring the received idea of the Author involved drawing attention away from texts as finished artefacts and focusing instead on the in-process aspects of textualizing. Roland Barthes's (1977 [1968]) declaration of the 'death of the author' effectively understood texts as sites of writing, or rather of: 'multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation' (148). Michel Foucault's description of the 'author function' (1979, from a 1969 lecture) centred writing too, but noted that the construction of the Author as originator has a relatively recent history and is underpinned by ideological control. However, as Sean Burke (1994) observed, those who undermined the centrality of the Author in this manner also continued to tacitly centre the Author, unavoidably, because the construction of the Author is engrained in the practice of reading. A volume by Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi eds. (1994) took yet another turn in that direction, arguing that the received concept of the Author has been hardened relatively recently (since the eighteenth century) with the development of intellectual property regimes: the Author was more or less invented as a Romantic concept of originator and genius, and has served to regulate intellectual property policing. The argument about the Romantic concept of the Author has been unpacked by Zachary Leader (1999), and the Author in relation to intellectual property regimes examined by Lior Zemer (2007). Meanwhile, further diffusion of the received notion of the Author was underway in the light of material changes in the text, especially as digital technologies of text production and access released the possibilities of

interactive or participatory writing and reading (from Bolter 1991, Gaggi 1997 and onwards). Also, analysis of the part that readers play in receiving texts had variously countered the determinations of Authorial guidance in reader-response and reception studies (from the 1960s onwards); how readers collectively construct an Author to structure their reading of texts rather than referring to real-world authoring of texts has also been examined (Kindt and Müller 2006, Claassen 2012).

There is then a substantial literary critical track-record of conceptualising the Author in a general and interrogative way. Much of these reflections have tended to regard the received notion of the Author as chimerical: as ideological personifications in the Romantic imagination; as a discourse-feature embedded in the reading strategies of critics and general readers; as a regulatory mechanism of intellectual property regimes; as a construction premised on print technology.

Literary critical approaches to the Author in terms of economic rationales are found mainly apropos of intellectual property regimes. In reading Alexander's observations on the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale, I had initially thought these are really to do with intellectual property. On reflection though, it occurs to me that in fact intellectual property is irrelevant to the picture Alexander has laid out: the standard Agreement between Publisher and Author (even for the General Book) supersedes the latter's control of intellectual property. Publisher and Author *share* their interest in maintaining control of intellectual property for the published product, so that does not play *between* them. *The Author and Publisher in fact control intellectual property prerogatives with regard to the external environment where the published product is circulated; the intellectual property regime offers regulatory mechanisms for the market rather than bearing on the relations amongst or between the (joint) producers.* In fact, policing of intellectual property is usually more actively undertaken by the Publisher than the Author, though it is usually undertaken in the name of the Author. So, intellectual property principles have no bearing on the economic relationship between Publisher and Author, which is solely determined by the Publishing Agreement.

I am not aware of existing literary critical analysis of the economic rationale of publishing and the Author's place in it. It seems to me that what Alexander says of the standard publishing Agreement for the General Book in III.43, "Research Work and Scholarly Publishing," is consistent with what I call the received concept of the Author above. Though there appears to be some assonance between the chimerical character of the Author in interrogative literary theory and the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale (as outlined by Alexander), there is a crucial difference.

In literary theory, interrogations of the received concept of the Author are premised on the understanding that the Author signifies a concrete position of power (has a close relationship to ‘Author-ity,’ as numerous post-modernist theorists have put it). The signification of the Author, it is argued, is used to exert control of how public or published texts are read. The Author persona concentrates prerogatives on itself which ground the power of the intellectual property regime (that is, of the justice system and the state on behalf of corporations) and organises the reading market, the education system, the publishing and media and entertainment industries accordingly. Interrogations of the Author therefore come with an air of radical or oppositional political commitment, and open analytical spaces which may subvert the determinations of power.

The Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing, as Alexander has outlined this, is a signification of powerlessness (the Fool, the dependable sucker). The Author in interrogative literary theory and the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing just do not gel.

I am trying to find alternative handles to conceptualise the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale in a literary critical fashion.

Perhaps we can think of the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale as the polar opposite of the Romantic concept of the Author – an *anti-Romantic concept of the Author*. In the entrepreneurial rationale, the Academic Author is such a slight and fluid signifier that it flickers constantly without quite going out, and each flicker has a different hue. It is a signifier which can be constantly rearticulated somewhat differently, depending on where and when it appears and to what purpose. However, the literary researchers who author Research Monographs, and find themselves attached to this signifier, are real enough.

Or, perhaps the Academic Author in the entrepreneurial rationale could be thought of as *a prototype of the intelligent machine* (a first gesture towards AI as author of the Research Monograph, see II.42, “The Shrinking Teacher and Pedagogical AI”). This sounds wacky even to me at present, but it makes a kind of sense. The Academic Author signifies then as part of the automated infrastructure of entrepreneurial corporations that can use it. The investments made by the corporate establishment around the Academic Author are for this machine’s energy intake (a salary and costs of raw research material), upgrading (encouraging through occasional career boosts and public recognition), and programming (directives on preferred areas of research production, conditions to set limits to what can be produced). The product though, such as the published Research Monograph, is constantly dissociated from the machine as soon as it emerges, and is capitalised as commodity by the corporate establishment. The intelligence of this machine is manifested in

being able to continuously come up with potentially profitable products which are not replicative. Each Research Monograph is unique and yet coherent, and only intelligence can produce that. This is not a machine used for piece-work or mass manufacture. This machine is a happy machine, so long as regularly lubricated with the oil of respect, pleasure, and a higher-than-economic purpose.

## 51. University, Ministry and Critical Research

*Suman Gupta*

A peculiarly shadowy part is played by what Alexander calls the University (i.e. any organisation that produces research) and the Ministry (i.e. relevant state agencies) in his account of the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing. The relationship between the Academic Author and the Scholarly Publisher can be understood by contemplating the Scholarly Publishing Agreement in its various forms for print, electronic and Open-Access Publishing – and Alexander does this. It is evident that the entrepreneurial rationale depends, variously, on the tacit or active collaboration of the University, Ministry and Scholarly Publisher. Evidently, this occurs because the University and Ministry seemingly wish to facilitate profit making generally for the public good, but in Alexander's account it is mainly the profit making of the Scholarly Publisher which is clarified. It remains unclear whether the University and Ministry have specific interests of their own in such collaboration. Perhaps Alexander does not wish to clarify those.

Very briefly, there are two main areas of collaboration. (1) *For print and customer-access Research e-Publications*: the Scholarly Publisher can minimise or erase returns for the Academic Author's work because that is arguably compensated by the University. The University encourages or pressures the Academic Authors it employs to produce publications without regard for returns, by tying that in with employment and career progression and covering some of the infrastructural costs of research. (2) *For Open-Access Scholarly Publication*: the Scholarly Publisher can assume the role of service provider and look to the Academic Author as consumer and financial investor. This is facilitated by the University and Ministry by offering grants which Academic Authors can apply for and then bring on their own behalf, to invest in and consume services offered by Scholarly Publishers.

The Ministry plays a decisive role in both areas of collaboration then, in two ways. First, since the Ministry has a regulatory function over the University sector as a whole, it can make legislation and issue directives which systematise and validate both areas (the part played by the British REF system of research assessment is a good illustration of this). Second, since the Ministry disburses some public funding to the University sector,

that public funding could be used by the University, with the Ministry's sanction, to aid both areas – especially the second. Other sources of not-for-profit funding can be called upon in this manner too.

Thus, the Academic Author's selfless entrepreneurialism on behalf of the profit-making entrepreneurialism of the Scholarly Publisher is underpinned by the collaboration of the University and Ministry. In making these arrangements the latter's interest could be, as they often claim, the same as the Academic Author's: to maximise the generation of benefits for all from research, while additionally tying that in with profit making generally (in this instance via the Scholarly Publisher) so that benefits are enhanced – all for the public good. That would suggest that the University and Ministry are themselves selflessly entrepreneurial, much like the Academic Author. But is that the case?

It is arguable that the economic interests of the University and Ministry are not as self-effacing as the Academic Author's in relation to scholarly publishing. Collaboration with the Scholarly Publisher, as outlined above, gives the University and Ministry a not-too-emphatic but quite definite control over research production by the Academic Author. The University and Ministry can thereby design the professional conditions of the Academic Author's research work so that some directions of research are encouraged over others. The Ministry can disburse funding for research through the University by emphasising some strategic directions of research. Since the compensations of researching, authoring and publishing are principally from the University and Ministry, and have negligible returns from the Scholarly Publisher, it makes sense for the Academic Author to follow research agendas set by the former. Those agendas can be set such that the Scholarly Publisher's entrepreneurial interests are not disturbed. In other words, the University and Ministry are thus in a position to control research production *through the process of research*.

The emerging arrangements described by Alexander for Open-Access Scholarly Publishing give the University and Ministry further scope for controlling research production, *more directly at the point of publication*. Since the Academic Author would usually have to take recourse to the University and Ministry to meet the costs of the Scholarly Publisher's services, decisions on what is desirable or otherwise for Open-Access Publishing can be taken by the University and Ministry to a significant degree. Thus also they can guide research production according to their strategic priorities.

Therefore, to serve their purposes the University and Ministry can, with the support of the Scholarly Publisher, influence what sort of research the Academic Author should engage in. Certain directions of what were discussed in Part I, "Panoptic," as 'applied' or 'basic' research could be pushed, specific themes could be focused, particular problems

could be foregrounded for research. In that way, the University and Ministry would be able to design the kind of research and publication that would serve their interests as, also, entrepreneurial corporations themselves – not so much by diktat as by economic rationalising. At this juncture I will not try to work out what precise sorts of entrepreneurial interests the University and Ministry might entertain, what sorts of profit making they may undertake on their own behalf.

On a somewhat different note: recalling Alexander and my earlier and contrary accounts of ‘applied’ and ‘basic’ research (I.7, “Joycean Lessons: Applied and Basic Research,” and I.11, “Disinterestedness and Academic Freedom”), I now feel that we have not quite covered the ground. In fact, at that juncture I too had unwittingly bought into Alexander’s suggestion that all research is or should be entrepreneurial – though actually arguing against that suggestion. There is, it now occurs to me, another kind of research which could perhaps be either ‘basic’ or ‘applied’ by my earlier understanding of the matter, but which has a more complex relationship with entrepreneurial objectives. The University and Ministry may well not be keen for this sort of research to be pursued and use their control of the Academic Author’s work to curtail such research. Apropos of basic research earlier, I had made out that it needs to be free and disinterested so that it can provide an open resource for purposive applied research as and when necessary; this need cannot be predicted, and this need cannot be engaged when it appears unless there is strong basic research to draw upon. In saying this, I had tacitly gone along with the idea that applied research serves entrepreneurial interests best. But applied research and its recourse to basic research need not be so: *applied research could be for the purpose of holding entrepreneurial activity to account where it goes against the public good*. The kind of basic research that tries to clarify, for instance, the fundamental principles and limits of social equity and justice may take an applied turn when addressed to a particular political juncture: such as, privatising state healthcare provisions or evidence of social discrimination of minorities. I think of this sort of basic-applied research as *critical research* which does not serve entrepreneurial ends but holds the appearance of injustice, prejudice, coercion, inequity, etc. in entrepreneurial and other organisations to account.

If the entrepreneurial University and Ministry find their interests questioned by critical research, they would be inclined to use their influence to discourage the undertaking and publication of such research.

### ***Alexander Search***

When Suman speaks of ‘Critical research,’ I see a marketing ploy. This ploy appears wherever the word ‘critical’ appears appended to an academic



pursuit. It announces the defiant, oppositional, radical spirit of itself for defiant, oppositional, radical spirits to consume. It designates an academic consent of some interest, moving from the neutrality of careful sifting and/or disapproving judgment towards a political attitude – a valorous political attitude. It is a well-worn path now, though a jump beyond Raymond Williams's 'criticism' in *Keywords* (1983). So, for instance, in linguistics there was Discourse Analysis and then there was Critical Discourse Analysis (radical), and there was Applied Linguistics and then Critical Applied Linguistics (radical) – the critical turn was the announcement of a non-compliant attitude. That was undergirded by Critical Theory, Critical Sociology, Critical Anthropology, Critical Humanities ... 'Critical' has some of the same rhetorical appeal as New-something (New Criticism, New Historicism, New Philology) or post-something (I hardly need to exemplify). The 'Critical' opens entrepreneurial possibilities for a given target market by holding entrepreneurial activity to account.

## 52. Saints, Fools, Robots, and Employees

### *Dismal Scientist*

I was initially puzzled as to the point of Alexander's lengthy analysis of the poor financial returns to academic authorship. It seemed to go against the grain of his argument for the centrality of entrepreneurship in literary scholarship to contend that the returns to the Academic Author are limited to the non-market benefits of personal satisfaction, academic prestige, public or non-profit employment, etc. It then occurred to me to think about this question in terms of market structure.

The business model of the specifically Scholarly Publisher is to publish a large number of academic publications. Each one brings in a comparatively small amount of revenue, but this is profitable if the costs are also small. Fortunately, the number of academic content suppliers is much larger than the capacity of the comparatively small numbers of publishers. As a consequence, the potential financial reward of content supply is partially appropriated as rent by the oligopolistic publishers and the rest is competed away by the multiplicity of suppliers. What are left are the non-pecuniary rewards. The Academic Author is not 'selfless' in Alexander's terms. They are as self-interested as any other market participant. It is simply that the scholarly publication market is structured in such a way that the specifically pecuniary rewards are competed away, leaving the non-pecuniary income and creating an illusion of selflessness.

Alexander here betrays his own academic perspective. This illusion is one of academic self-flattery. From the perspective of the Scholarly Publisher, the academic content appears as a freely available resource which can be appropriated and then privatised through the acquisition of copyright. Perhaps this perception of the publisher is in all respects in fact accurate. The Academic Author only exists insofar as her signature legally transfers ownership of the resource to the Scholarly Publisher and thus creates a saleable item of private property. Alexander's characterisation of these academic entrepreneurs as selfless is inaccurate, unnecessary and ultimately undermines his interesting argument.

Similarly, Suman's alternative characterisation of these actors as described by Alexander as 'Fools' is also off the mark. They are making the best of an unfavourable market structure. The criticism that could be

levelled is that the suppliers have so far failed to organise an effective effort to change this market structure to one which is more favourable to their interests. This could conceivably be done through collectively bargaining with publishers. This would, however, demand discipline and a sense of solidarity among the academic suppliers.

That is unlikely precisely because the academic suppliers are in fact the entrepreneurs that Alexander contends they are. These days, the term 'entrepreneur' has a heroic ambiance which, perhaps contradictorily, anyone investing money or effort has become entitled to claim. The owner of every corner shop is calling herself an entrepreneur. This, however, loses the specific meaning of the word. An entrepreneur is properly someone who brings something substantially new to the market and builds a business through overcoming inertia and resistance to the new. Each published academic product is supposed to be a unique academic contribution. Producers are only producers to the extent that they stand out from their compatriots undermining potential solidarity. Holding back publication is also to undertake a significant risk as replication or near replication of the contribution deprives it of all value including those which are non-pecuniary.

Suman's alternative characterisation of these actors as akin to machines under the dominance of today's academic managerialism is unhelpfully rhetorical and moralistic. The discussion in Part II above on how the entrepreneurial University is morphing with the Corporate Research Provider (starting from II.18, "Away From the Monopolistic University") is relevant here, as is Fabio's disquiet about using the name of 'University' for this new entity, the entrepreneurial University. The linguistic root of university is 'a community of scholars.' The entrepreneurial University of today is more aptly thought of as the Research and Training Institute. These institutes are not communities of scholars but rather largely profit-making corporations which employ researchers and trainers. So Academic Authors are not fools or machines, they are simply *employees*.

Like all employees they produce outputs intended to ultimately generate revenue. And like all employees they do so under the direction of their employers and do not own the product of their work. The decision by the British Ministry to require Open-Access Publication is a decision well within their rights as grantors to the Research and Training Institute, which they judge to serve their own entrepreneurial ends (in Alexander's terms). The employees are not selfless or foolish. They are simply making a living in a capitalist economy. The entrepreneurial impulse has, however, shifted to those who employ them.

## 53. Employees?

*Suman Gupta*

My understanding of what Alexander is at is much the same as Dismal Scientist's: a demonstration of how 'the academic publication market is structured in such a way that the specifically pecuniary rewards are competed away' from Academic Authors. However, Dismal Scientist then goes on to say that both Alexander and I have been misguided in our characterisation of the Academic Author in this market structure. According to him, Alexander has tended to depict the Academic Author as good (selfless entrepreneurs, business-friendly saints), whereas I have tended to present the Academic Author as bad (not self-interested enough to have any meaningful business standing, business-oblivious fools). All this seems too moralistic or polemical to Dismal Scientist, who prefers an un-moralistic (or is it demoralizing?) characterisation of 'employee' with functions and functioning defined by employers: an entity neutrally understood in terms of its economic relationship with an employer, and accordingly or conditionally self-interested.

Since Dismal Scientist has evinced an interest in word origins here, I looked up 'employee' in the OED: 'A person who works for an employer; spec. a person employed for wages or a salary under an employment contract, esp. at non-executive level,' with examples of usage in English charted from 1814 and onwards. It has a nice historical grounding in the wage-form in accounting by old-fashioned manufacturing or industrial firms that helped raise margins in realising surplus value for employers.

As such, Dismal Scientist's neutered characterisation of the Academic Author as 'employee' in the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing seems to slip at two levels. (1) The relationship of the Academic Author to the University might be of employee to employer, but the relationship of Academic Author to the Scholarly Publisher is not so. It could be thought of as a one-off partnership or perhaps in terms of an occasional co-production agreement. The thing of interest is that the Academic Author's employee relation to the University is nevertheless brought to bear upon the relationship with the Scholarly Publisher, though the University and the Scholarly Publisher are seemingly unrelated corporations. (2) In the e-Publishing and Open-Access Publishing scenario, the

employee-like characterisation seems even less plausible. The Scholarly Publisher is now not akin at all to an industrial producer, and is almost purely a service provider. The relationship between the Academic Author and Scholarly Publisher is diffuse: who is using whose services? The Academic Author is certainly not getting a wage (or anything) from the Scholarly Publisher; on the contrary, the Academic Author is actually paying (in legal terms).

Even if we did go along with the characterisation of Academic Authors as simply employees, I do not see why that renders ethical considerations inappropriate. Wage-earning employees in a factory would worry about their self-interests and economic dues for the work they do: this is a moral issue. If they feel they are getting lower wages than they should, they will and should protest and mobilise. From the factory owner's point of view, if they do not they are saints; from the working employee's point of view, if they do not they are fools. What about Academic Authors in relation to the University and the Scholarly Publisher?

### *Dismal Scientist*

Suman's comment confuses the two separate situations in which the Academic Author finds herself. No doubt this confusion arises because I did not go out of my way to distinguish these situations. And the reason I did not is because Academic Authors at the moment are occupying both positions simultaneously.

I agree that when Academic Authors deal with Scholarly Publishers directly they do not do so as employees. They are entrepreneurial suppliers of intermediate goods (known in digital circles as 'content') to be added to other goods and so worked up into a publication by the publisher. This is not a co-production agreement as the sale of the content to the publisher takes place prior to the publication which is the sole property (output) of the publisher.

This situation changes under the Open-Access Publishing scenario. The fact that the 'University' and/or the Ministry can dictate Open-Access publishing is an indication that the relationship between the Academic Author and the 'University' or Ministry is one of employment for wage or salary. The product of the Academic Author's effort belongs to the employer who is in control of the disposition of the product. This is simply an ordinary labour contract. It would be unfair to require the employee to pay the Scholarly Publisher's fee for Open-Access Publication and hence a grant of some sort is usually provided. In this scenario the relationship is really between the 'University' and/or the Ministry and the Scholarly Publisher. The Academic Author is, again, simply the employee of the 'University.'

I have put the University above in quotation marks because this relationship is incompatible with the traditional community of scholars. The Academic Author is dealing with a different kind of institution, as I said: the Research and Training Institute. The Academic Author was often hired when the institution was a University in an understandable sense, and is either uncomfortable with or in denial about the transition. Hence there is a lot of superfluous resentment. New contracts which make this explicit would solve a lot of problems.

Suman recommends that Academic Authors should organise themselves to demand higher wages from the 'University.' This elegantly confirms my point that the actors involved are employees. However, I would, on the contrary, recommend that the employees bargain with their employer on an individual basis. Under this arrangement, competition for productive employees would guarantee that each received a return commensurate with their individual productivity (as judged by the employer of course). They would then be fairly compensated for their contribution to the employer's enterprise and would recover a dignity appropriate to their new situation – individual actors making a free labour contract with the individual employer.

Perhaps Suman's reference to Academic Authors producing surplus labour also underlines my point about employees, though I, like all real economists, profess no knowledge of Marx. I prefer the literary post-modernist's view of a relentless decentring of all social identities so that attention is constantly returned to the unique individual, so that the post-modernist may carry on with methodological individualism.

### *Alexander Search*

I was desisting from replying to Suman's observations because I find his endless promises of fire and brimstone tiring, and am totally at one with the spirit in which Dismal Scientist proposes 'employee' as the role that the Academic Author plays. However, I did not suggest there is anything saintly about selfless entrepreneurialism, it is a necessary feature of market arrangements – we do not really need to normativise self-interest, do we?

I do have a few doubts about 'employee' as applicable here though, and a few quibbles with Dismal Scientist's response to Suman. Insofar as royalties are conventional, the agreement between Author and Publisher is, it seems to me, more in the nature of a co-production agreement rather than an agreement for the supply of intermediate goods. But that is a minor matter.

For the Open-Access Publication arrangement, Dismal Scientist is assuming that the University and Ministry will always offer financial support to the Academic Author (however conditional that support might

be) – so each Open-Access publication will always be merely a confirmation of an ongoing employer-employee relationship. My own feeling is that this is only an interim situation. That is why the Academic Author has been so firmly foregrounded as legally liable for finances in Scholarly Publishing Agreements. The University and Ministry could have made direct payment arrangements with Scholarly Publishers, as long as the latter do the gatekeeping and production – but that has not happened. Instead, legally the Academic Author remains responsible to the Scholarly Publisher, even if the money is really coming from the University and Ministry. I suspect that once these Open-Access Publication arrangements settle and become normalised, the University and Ministry will withdraw that financial support (perhaps except for STEM subjects). Then it will be entirely clear that the Academic Author is the investor in publication (using some of the salary she is provided by the University to that end), and the Scholarly Publisher is the service-provider.

### *Dismal Scientist*

Royalties are a payment for intellectual property. In this case the property (once transferred) is an input into the final good, the publication.

If the employer instructs the employee to pay for a service which benefits the employer – for instance, patronise the company shop at inflated prices – this is simply a claw-back and hence a reduction of wages.

## 54. End of the Research Monograph

### *Alexander Search*

I have always wanted to announce the end of something. In my salad days, the end or death of the author, the novel, communism, class, ideology, politics, theory, certainty, history, and the end of the end were variously announced, and many other ends have been debated since. The obituary of any abstraction has, it seems, a ready market.

Contemplating the end of the Research Monograph is more material and less abstract, and less to be bemoaned than ends usually are (of course, Francis Fukuyama 1992 was far from bemoaning the end of history). To be clear: the kind of published Research Monograph I have been considering above is what I am proclaiming the end of, the sort that could be a PhD dissertation turned into a published academic book – i.e. most academic books, irrespective of whether they start life as a PhD dissertation. The Research Monograph with broad commercial potential as a general interest more-than-Research Monograph, especially with an established more-than-Academic Author, and especially with some cross-over potential as a reference book or textbook, is in no mortal danger.

Some of the points touched upon earlier in going through the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly e-Publishing and Scholarly Open-Access Publishing are worth recalling. I had mentioned (in III.48, “The Enterprise of Open-Access Scholarly Publishing”) that the Geoffrey Crossick (2015) report for UK HEFCE implicitly wondered whether the Research Monograph is really a necessary form of scholarly output any longer, and found that in the Humanities and Social Sciences it is still valued. The Academic Author’s strong sense of pre-contractual ownership interferes with the management of Research Monographs in an e-Publishing and Open-Access Publishing environment with entrepreneurial considerations in mind. Comparatively, I had observed in III.48, the Journal Research Paper has an implicitly corporate character and weaker investments of pre-contractual ownership by the Academic Author. This is therefore easier to manage (to market and distribute flexibly), and it is easier to get the Academic Author to pay for Open Access (via University and Ministry). If the Research Monograph can be treated or made to work like Research Journal Papers, and yield the same kind of profits and benefits as the latter



do, the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing would be much easier to realise.

Indeed, as also observed above, the University and Ministry increasingly encourage the production of the Research Journal Paper at the expense of the Research Monograph. That is a move in the right direction for the entrepreneurial rationale of Scholarly Publishing. Further, perhaps more indicatively, the flexibility of e-publication enables a step that some Scholarly Publishers and online retailers are beginning to take: selling not only the Research Monograph as an e-book but also chapter by chapter. This effectively dismantles the integrity of the Research Monograph from within, and allows it to be usefully treated as a number of Research Journal Papers. This can be done effortlessly for edited volumes of papers, where chapters work in the same way as Research Journal Papers, but is now also done for Research Monographs.

These are slight indications of a larger drift in Scholarly Publishing, which makes sense in every way, not only for the entrepreneurial interests of the corporations involved (Scholarly Publisher, University, Ministry), but also for the profession of doing academic research and authoring. The internal logic of the profession of research, and not just within the University and at the behest of the Ministry, makes this direction necessary. Quite understandably, the logic of the profession in its current phase gels with current entrepreneurial rationales, and therein it seems evident that the Research Monograph is a dying form of Scholarly Publication. Several factors play here.

First, research in all fields evince growing complexity, which means that increasingly all fields have to be engaged with by narrowly focused specialists working together rather than by individual and wide-ranging researchers. The specialist published outputs from this field are then of interest only to those who are engaged in investigating some aspect thereof, for whom new insights and findings might be of interest for their own work. These specialists who read each other's outputs share enough common knowledge of concepts, sources, and background not to need these to be constantly reiterated and summarised; each new intervention can be quickly and economically communicated. It is in the nature of all research areas that specialist outputs will become increasingly less voluminous insofar as they are simply communications within an in-group of specialists. The specialist Research Monograph was a symptom of an atomised research environment which called for extensive interventions by a few leading researchers in emerging fields; the Research Paper is the appropriate form of intervention within a continuum of collaborative communication that now allows complex fields of professional enquiry to be pushed forward. This gels with the idea in Scholarly Publishing that each Academic Author works anyway to market her research publication

to other Academic Authors and thereby sharpens the disciplinary remit of her research.

Second, it is mainly a kind of inertia of academic culture and cultural capital in some areas (especially in the Humanities, particularly in literary research) that explains the persistence of the notion that the Research Monograph is valuable *per se*. A former Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) UK Director, Shearer West, had complained in 2013 that the prevailing 'lone-wolf culture' in this area needs to be discouraged. Perhaps because the observation was greeted with some derision at the time, online traces of it have almost been wiped out (check Smith 2014 for a mention) – but it was a prescient observation. The more politic statement in AHRC's (2013) strategy document for 2013-2018, *The Human World*, that, 'The AHRC recognises that research produced by individuals and that produced collaboratively have equal value' (15), was therefore understandably underpinned by several pushes towards less individuality and more collectivity. One of its core principles was stated thus: 'there will be continuing need to bring arts and humanities researchers together to influence the context in which they work; to build consortia, cross-disciplinary networks and multi-funder partnerships; and to support individual researchers to forge stronger relationships with academics overseas' (8). It was evident that much funding would be directed towards collaborations and collective work. Moreover, individuality in research referred there, it was indicated, to three kinds of persons: 'postgraduate researchers,' 'early-career researchers,' and 'leaders' (18-9). In brief, it referred to those who are entering the profession and those who are in fact administering collectives. This document is a small gesture towards a direction that can be evidenced through numerous policy documents in numerous countries, indicating a move by the Ministry and University to engineer consolidation of specialist teams by funding mechanisms which discourage individual researchers from being lone wolves. The published output of the former is most appropriately the Research Paper (or a collection of chapters or a multi-authored report), just as that of the latter had been the Research Monograph.

Third, the same AHRC (2013) strategy document 2013-2018 also holds it as leading principles that:

- at a time of great pressure on public finances, and when the UK Government continues to invest substantially, researchers are increasingly asked that the benefits of that investment be realised and made specific;
- as the 'knowledge economy' advances, more organisations – public and private – are part of the creation of knowledge and more people are interested in its outcomes; as a corollary there is increasing demand for the

freer circulation of ideas through, for example, open access to publications  
(8)

In brief, while collaborating in a specialist way with each other, academic researchers are also expected to make an effort to explain their findings for lay persons and non-specialist end-users – especially through Open-Access Publishing. The Research Paper has, as we have seen, a less awkward purchase in the Open-Access Publishing environment than the Research Monograph. Insofar as that leaves some scope for book-length publication, that is most likely to be of a reference book or textbook or general reader variety which has clear benefits for all, and not inconsiderable profit-making potential too.

Fourth, the main purpose of the conventional Research Monograph is now as a qualification: for instance, in the form of a PhD dissertation. It demonstrates when an apprentice researcher has acquired a sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge in an area (the shared pool of knowledge about concepts, sources, background between specialist in an area) to be admitted to the profession of being a specialist researcher. Once that demonstration is recognised (by the award of a degree) and the researcher becomes a professional specialist, she need not make any further demonstrations of being broad-ranging thinkers but should join the collaboration of specialists through small-scale interventions which genuinely push knowledge forward now. So the PhD dissertation becomes a final point of Research Monograph production which does not need to pass into publication as a book any longer. That can always be put Open Access online as such, especially since the Academic Author has already paid for it as a PhD student (or her sponsors have). Otherwise, the professional specialist should focus on Research Papers and, if so inclined, reference books and textbooks and general-interest accounts of her research.

These four points seem to me to present compelling and reasonable arguments for weeding out the conventional Research Monograph, with its strongly centred notion of Academic Authorship, from Scholarly Publishing.

A few final points on why the Research Journal Paper is particularly appropriate for generating benefits for all and profits for the Scholarly Publisher, University and Ministry in the e-Publishing and Open-Access Publishing environment remain to be made.

First, insofar as taken directly to Open-Access Publishing, publication costs for Research Journal Papers are low and it is therefore easier to persuade Academic Authors – supported by the University and Ministry – to arrange to pay those costs. Since Academic Authors have a weak sense of pre-contractual ownership of the Research Journal Paper they have a less self-interested stake in its publication. So suitable profit making for

the Scholarly Publisher can be guaranteed while the benefits of Open Access are fully availed.

Second, insofar as first made available as an e-publication for closed-market access, there are two good reasons for expecting some immediate profit generation for the Scholarly Publisher from Research Journal Papers, while extending benefits to relevant researchers in the University. Thus, the Research Journal Paper can be packaged and sold to consumers in various ways: as an affordable short text-in-itself; within subscriptions to specific journal titles; within various scales of subscriptions to a range of journal titles and other scholarly resources (according to subject area, publisher or retailer, indexing and search platforms, etc.). The University can then subscribe to the last by investing a substantial part of the (often public or not-for-profit) funding that used to be earmarked for library acquisitions. Further, being interventions at the cutting edge of different research areas, researchers engaged in those areas demand immediate access to new Research Journal Papers to maintain their academic competitiveness. The University naturally has an interest in helping researchers in their employ to do so. Consequently, for a critical period after publication there is immediate and high demand for Research Journal Papers within a limited scholarly market which can be capitalised on by e-publication for closed-market access.

Third, since the period of high demand is as short as it takes to reach the limited market with immediate demand (mainly of researchers in the subscribing University), and given that the profits from that phase can be high, it becomes possible for the Scholarly Publisher to offer Open-Access Publication of Research Journal Papers at a later stage if they wish to. They can always withhold that possibility for Research Journal Papers which seem to have longer term commercial viability. Thus, a slightly belated but unarguable maximisation of benefits can be afforded after calculable profits have been made.

### ***Fabio Akcelrud Durão***

Alexander's texts in this Part touch on an important topic. Reading them, I came to realise that they are proportionally strong to the existing degree of commodification of academic practices. The closer to the market a given part of academic life is, the more cogent his arguments seem to be. His contributions, then, could be divided into two main groups: those which have a prospective bent and those with a more descriptive character. The latter seems to be the case in this Part. It had already occurred to me that big books are disappearing and that for many academics I know their *magnum opus* was their PhD dissertation. Alexander's final arguments above make sense, but it is bad sense. What he is doing (and governments

everywhere as well) is basically to transpose on literary studies the *modus operandi* of the natural sciences. This is a questionable combination. I can think of the following counterarguments, which also may help characterise the specificity of literature in contradistinction to other fields.

First, in literary studies, there is no sharp separation between the object and its configuration; one's approach to a strong work interferes in it. This is valid not only for that which the critic says the text *is*, but also for the writing style itself (it is worth discussing whether bad composition renders good arguments false). Second, the Research Monograph is still necessary for literary studies, because questions are not pre-established. A scholar can form her horizon of interpretation in the way she wants to and some problems are naturally big, requiring lengthy exposition. Some approaches, such as the comparative, need more space. Third, Alexander's description is presentist and deals with knowledge as waves succeeding in quick progression, but that is not the way time works in the humanities, especially in literary studies. Here the relationship with the past is not one of supplanting cycles of oblivion, but of accumulation. Erudition has a hard time adapting to 5,000-word papers. Fourth, as I have observed elsewhere, the idea of 'fields' do not sit comfortably in literary studies. Works do not exist as *a priori* entities in the way our lungs or butterflies do. They have no social function now, given that 'culture' as a transcendent sphere has ceased to exist and nationhood is defined by other means. The heavier, the more self-confident and self-believing, notions of 'research' and 'field' become, the more they must rely on the fixity and firmness of an object that does not exist. Indeed, endowing literature with all this scientific armour may turn out to be an efficient way of doing away with it. This is because the disparity between the ever-increasing specificity demanded by the concept of 'field' and the precariousness of literature as an object will become too ludicrous. Perhaps all this boils down to the fact that literature cannot just point to itself, but must rather include some sort of exteriority without which it shrinks into absurdity – call it life, society, experience, pleasure or something else.

## **IV. LEADERSHIP**

## 55. Leadership Education and that ‘Shakespeherian Rag’

*Alexander Search*

I will not try to describe what leadership consists in, not even in the contained sense of ‘academic leadership.’ Numerous scholarly-looking publications on the typologies and styles of leadership (traditional/legal-rational/charismatic; transactional/transformational; etc.) fixate on the *content* of leadership: What does leadership consist in? Who is a leader? What does she do? Mystifications, sweeping assertions and aphoristic pronouncements unfortunately abound in these publications. But they are testament to the enormous importance of the issue, not to be dismissed lightly. Also, these publications are consistently underpinned by certain dominant or common understandings in conceptualising leadership now – usually tacitly, so that they are understood without necessarily being discussed. Let me try to state some of those baldly as received assumptions, and you can decide for yourself how familiar and acceptable they are. They do, at any rate, help us consider the bearing of leadership, if any, on literary research.

(1) At present, the only way of gauging leadership in relation to an organisation or collective is in terms of outcomes by some measure. Those are foremost in terms of the sustainable generation of profits, with all other outcomes understood as facilitating (e.g., trust, creativity, efficiency, inspiration) or consequent (e.g., benefits for all or enrichment according to desserts) factors. The profit-led outcomes may then be characterised in broader and loose terms as growth, expansion, consolidation, stability, change, transformation, etc. The most significant performance measure in all that is related to the generation of profits, expressed in a graded and precise monetary form. In that sense, the role of all leadership is understood now as being principally an entrepreneurial one.

(2) However, there is no robust way of showing precisely how and to what degree leadership does lead to profitable or unprofitable outcomes for an organisation or collective. The consequential relationship between leadership and outcome can only be more or less habitually or instinctively claimed, assumed, accepted. Several factors interfere with rendering this relationship clear and tractable. First, leadership is usually a distributed

role, being delegated across several actors in an organisation or collective. However efficiently hierarchical the organisation or collective might be, its structure will contain variations of input and influence. Second, it is easier to peg specific profitable outcomes to the roles played by workers, the hands-on producers – let us say, the followers rather than the leaders. Third, factors circumstantial or extrinsic to the organisation or collective in question, outside the determinations of leadership, usually play a significant part: larger economic environments, cultural behaviours, acts of god, etc. Fourth, even if someone holding a leadership role makes some definite input with profitable outcomes, it is difficult to tell whether the outcome was due to leadership prerogatives or due to some sort of skill or knowledge which would have worked irrespective of those prerogatives.

(3) At the same time, the leadership role comes with a powerful prerogative to represent and explain outcomes both to and on behalf of the organisation or collective in question. The leader, therefore, has first say in claiming or disowning responsibility for outcomes. Naturally, the leader always firmly claims responsibility for profitable outcomes and often disowns responsibility for unprofitable or otherwise deleterious outcomes. Equally, the organisation or collective in question, which has, for whatever reason and however conditionally, accepted the legitimacy of the leadership role, is inclined to attribute clear responsibility for outcomes to leadership. That attribution of responsibility may differ from the leader's own claims, but it still endows leadership with an apparently clear relationship to outcomes. In brief, the leadership role is apt to be over-determined in terms of understanding its relation to outcomes, even though there is no way of clarifying a consequential relationship between leadership and outcomes.

(4) Given that leadership's relation to outcomes is over-determined, unsurprisingly an impression comes to prevail that by educating and moulding the appropriate sort of leaders it should be possible to obtain the desired outcomes for an organisation or collective – especially, profitable outcomes. A great industry of leadership education and training is therefore now in place, founded on this shaky idea. Contemplating what this education should offer and cover poses certain conundrums and ways of dealing with them. *First*, with all the above observations in view, it is difficult to pin down what specific skills or knowledge, such as can be systematically articulated and rigorously examined, bear upon leadership. Leadership roles at every juncture seem to involve abilities which are somewhat less than being skilled or evincing knowledge. Leaders seemingly recruit and deploy skilled workers and knowledgeable experts, which calls for an ability to recognise skilfulness without being skilled or to take advantage of expertise without being expert. Leadership education has consequently tended to make a virtue of being semi-skilled and semi-



knowledgeable in a number of different areas, rather than being skilled or knowledgeable in any. However, that contributes to the fuzziness or intractability of the relationship between leadership and profitable outcomes. *Second*, as being skilled or knowledgeable then does not qualify persons for being educators for leaders, the question arises as to who could be the educators and by what authority? Further, since success in leadership is only gauged by outcomes and yet leadership putatively takes place before those outcomes, the only recognisable authority that seems relevant is that of experience of having been a successful leader. Experience therefore has a significant authority-conferring part for leadership educators, which is to say that leadership education consists in an auto-perpetuating and auto-confirming process which is difficult to validate objectively. The measures of external validation that apply elsewhere in education seem not to apply here, and the role of the instructor is often less a matter of following a curriculum than being a role-model. *Third*, being semi-skilled and semi-knowledgeable, even across several areas, is a doubtful basis for seeking legitimacy within most organisations and collectives. To claim experience of success is to have become a leader already, so in no need of education though good for becoming an educator. The usual answer to this circularity in leadership education is to assert that leadership ultimately rests neither in knowledge nor skills and nor wholly in experience but in deeper factors. Such deeper factors usually converge on inborn abilities which can be honed (IQ, physical appearance, temperament, etc. – genes) and inherited privileges which can be capitalised (affluent or powerful family connections, elite socialisation, etc.). It is therefore arguable that leadership education tends to incline would-be leaders towards fascist and/or elitist subscriptions.

The situation outlined in the four points above appears to present some entrepreneurial opportunities for all Academic Researchers, even literary researchers. On the one hand, it is unclear what sort of skills and knowledge leadership education should impart, so putatively some understanding of various areas of skills and knowledge could be useful, across various disciplines – including literature. On the other hand, there is this large, well-endowed, and seemingly profitable leadership education industry in place. Literary researchers may be able to have some input there.

The idea has naturally occurred to various leadership educators with literary interests already. Literary studies have been brought to bear on leadership education at times. To what degree entrepreneurial literary researchers have taken up or could take up such opportunities is worth pausing on here.

To bolster the thought let me quickly outline one direction from which literary study seems to have fed into leadership education. The study of

Shakespeare's plays has obviously proved accommodative in all sorts of contexts, and now comes with pre-confirmed literary and economic value which could extend in unexpected directions – a circumstance that has not escaped University leaders (Kirp's 2003 account of the development of entrepreneurial US universities notes short-lived courses on Shakespeare without having to read the plays, 'Shakespeare Lite', 121). So, unsurprisingly, Shakespeare's plays have been ploughed for leadership education too, and several books devoted only to them are available for the purpose: Norman Augustine and Kenneth Adelman's *Shakespeare in Charge: The Bard's Guide to Leading and Succeeding on the Business Stage* (1999); Paul Corrigan's *Shakespeare on Management: Leadership Lessons for Today's Managers* (1999); John Whitney and Tina Packer's *Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management* (2000); Richard Olivier's *Inspirational Leadership: Henry V and the Muse of Fire – Timeless Insights from Shakespeare's Greatest Leader* (2001); Eric de Haan's *The Consulting Process as Drama: Learning from King Lear* (2003). There are also Shakespearean chapters and illustrations in numerous management and leadership guidebooks. These are all cognisant of the fact that leaders do not need to be knowledgeable of Shakespeare, do not need to really read (let alone read closely and interpret) Shakespeare's plays, but can still benefit from contemplating them. They are still a few notches more demanding than *Shakespeare for Dummies* (Doyle and Lischner 1999). To be precise, these do not (to use terms explained in II.29, "Professional Interpretation") encourage critical purposing of Shakespeare's plays; these are pre-purposed texts which answer would-be leaders' questions using Shakespeare's plays as an obviously authority-bearing vehicle.

This might be an approach to Shakespeare that most literary researchers are at present not accustomed to taking. With our entrepreneurial age in view, literary researchers working on Shakespeare's works have occasionally produced scholarly monographs which seem to have some potential interest for entrepreneurial leaders (there is no other kind of leader, of course), and might putatively inform leadership education. In fact, they mostly do not. These are actually more weightily knowledgeable than leadership education calls for. For the really keen Shakespeare devotee among would-be leaders, Frederick Turner's *Shakespeare's Twenty-First Century Economics* (1999), with its nuanced melding of language and form in Shakespeare's work with economic concepts, might possibly prove absorbing. However, dense historicist scholarship, such as David Hawkes's *Shakespeare and Economic Theory* (2015) or Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan's edited volume *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Century* (2016) offer little for leaderly ambitions. All too often, literary scholarship in our time tends to be unnecessarily discouraging for leaders. For instance, Sophie Ward's

*Using Shakespeare's Plays to Explore Education Policy Today: Neoliberalism through the Lens of Renaissance Humanism* (2017), offers a reading of *Hamlet* to reflect on “entrepreneurial heroes” of today (Ch.1):

Hamlet's tortuous soul-searching provided the template for Romantic depictions of social misfits, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and established the literary trope of the sensitive thinker struggling to cope in a world of phlegmatic doers. At first glance, *Hamlet* appears an unlikely blueprint for the neoliberal ‘go-getter,’ yet it paved the way for both Romantic mysticism and the rejection of this route of travel in the form of Rand's Market-Romantic philosophy, and the play's depiction of rationality and tradition arguably provides a useful lens through which to scrutinise neoliberal theory on volition and entrepreneurialism. (Ward 2017: 14)

It is perhaps not difficult to understand and even to sympathise with would-be leaders feeling put off by this kind of scholarship.

## 56. The Invisible Literary Researcher

### *Alexander Search*

As observed above, some effort has been made to bring literature, and more broadly the humanities, into leadership education. The possibilities have been considered occasionally in a scholarly register (e.g. Steyaert, Beyes and Parker eds. 2016, Chs.4, 5, 37; Wren, Riggio and Genovese eds. 2009; in a 2007 special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly*; Gagliardi and Czarniawska eds. 2006). These include wishful interventions by entrepreneurial humanities scholars. More importantly, leadership gurus have occasionally produced guidebooks and textbooks which can be used in teaching programmes. An indicative list would include: Robert Brawer, *The Fictions of Business: Insights on Management from Great Literature* (1998); James March and Thierry Weil, *On Leadership* (2005 [2003]); Joseph Badaracco Jr., *Questions of Character: Illuminating the Heart of Leadership Through Literature* (2006); Sandra Sucher, *Teaching The Moral Leader: A Literature-Based Leadership Course: A Guide for Instructors* (2007); Edward W. Younkens, *Exploring Capitalist Fiction: Business through Literature and Film* (2014); Robert McManus and Gama Perruci, *Understanding Leadership: An Arts and Humanities Perspective* (2015). These authors' credentials as leadership educators are impeccable. Brawer was CEO of Maidenform Worldwide (women's underwear manufacturer) and a Professor at New York University's School of Professional Studies; March is Professor of International Management at Stanford Business School, and Weil is Professor of Innovation Management at Mines ParisTech; Badaracco is Professor of Business Ethics at Harvard Business School; Sucher is Professor of Management Practice in Harvard Business School; Younkens is Professor of Accountancy and Business Administration at the Wheeling Jesuit University; McManus and Perucci are both professors at the McDonough Leadership Center at Marietta College in Ohio. None of the authors are bread-and-butter literary researchers. They are perfectly placed to offer what such publications are designed for, as IV.1 suggests (there with Shakespeare in view): pre-purposed texts which answer would-be leaders' questions using great literature as vehicles. These books are tried and tested in leadership education programmes.

They also share a vision of literature which entrepreneurial literary researchers contemplating a foothold in leadership education should take note of. Their vision can be summarised in three uncomplicated points.

(1) Engagement with literature, though seemingly distant from entrepreneurial leadership, offers something that directly relevant courses on business accounting, organisation management, human resources, public relations and marketing, group psychology, etc. do not.

(2) This extra something can be accessed only through obviously great or serious literature, widely acknowledged as such (no 'Canon Wars' here). None insist on choosing literary texts depicting business matters (Brawer and Younkis put some emphasis on this). They all insist that the texts in question should be serious, great, classic. To some extent, they do so because great literary texts endow would-be leaders with cultural capital; evincing awareness of such texts gives a leaderly edge. This is particularly the case where greatness is universally acknowledged, as for Shakespeare's plays. More importantly, for the above-named authors greatness (or seriousness) is a confirmation of the real-world relevance of these texts. These texts are great because people across time and in different places have found something meaningful to their lives in them. This suggests that they carry something which could resonate with all sorts of organisations and collectives and the widest range of markets, which naturally the leader should try to extricate and use entrepreneurially when possible.

(3) Taking advantage of this quality of greatness involves reading such texts as if they are reports of real-world situations, preferably featuring a protagonist who can be identified as playing a leadership role. This is the extra something that can be obtained from literature: experience analogous to engaging with mock judicial trials, surgery simulations, or business-school case studies; experience of the complex interpersonal situations which leaders may encounter in real life. Literary texts could be purposed for leadership education if treated as straightforward mimesis, without being complicated by stylistic, formalistic, aesthetic, historicist or inter-textual considerations. This is the key point of using literature for leadership education, and the above-named guidebooks emphasise this variously. The general approach is put succinctly by Badaracco (2006), thus:

How does serious fiction help us understand leadership? The answer is simple but extraordinarily powerful: serious fiction gives us a unique, inside view of leadership. In real life, most people see the leaders of their organizations only occasionally and get only fleeting glimpses of what these leaders are thinking and feeling. Even interviews with executives have their limits. Executives say only so much, even when they want to be candid: sensitivities

have to be observed, memory fades and sometimes distorts and successes crowd out failures.

In contrast, serious literature offers a view from the inside. It opens doors to a world rarely seen – except, on occasion, by leaders' spouses and closest friends. It lets us watch leaders as they think, worry, hope, hesitate, commit, exult, regret, and reflect. We see their characters tested, reshaped, strengthened, or weakened. These books draw us into leaders' worlds, put us in their shows, and at times let us share their experiences. (3)

It may be inferred that the serious fiction in question always feature leader-like characters; in any given situation, someone is always a leader.

This three-point approach might seem discouraging to entrepreneurial literary researchers hoping for entry into leadership education. Serious literary research usually begins by stepping beyond the assumption that literary texts are merely simulations of real-world situations and should be read in terms of identifying or empathising with protagonists. The above-named authors are well aware of literary researchers' penchant for complicating matters. Therefore, they all insist on, and offer, *direct encounters between literary texts and would-be leaders, unmediated by literary research*. They are clear about this, and entrepreneurial literary researchers with interest in leadership education should bear it in mind. None of them refer to literary research about the great texts which they discuss. Badaracco (2006) is forthright about keeping literary research well out of sight. He suggests bringing literary texts into leadership education by a 'sleight of hand,' that is, by treating them as business-school case studies, and observes: 'The sleight of hand was important because many people associate literature with abstruse academic talk about Freudian imagery or deconstruction; case studies, on the other hand, are familiar tools for management education' (2). Others are more tactful in removing the mediation of literary research. March and Weil (2005), who have a sentimental attachment to the greatness of classical scholarly traditions, simply admit that their approach to literary texts is but one approach – a worthy one for leaders – which neither competes with nor considers those explored by literary researchers:

Reading great books is an end and a pleasure in itself. Reading them in a particular light makes it possible to escape from the tradition of analyses that focus on other aspects of a work, as one of the characteristics of great literature is that it gives rise to a host of interpretations, but can never be reduced to these. (6)

In effect, they politely put literary research aside – live and let live. Sucher (2007) quickly cites some authorities to justify taking this approach, so that

Wayne Booth comes up briefly, before continuing without further fiddling with literary research. Others simply do not mention it.

For the entrepreneurial literary researcher seeking a foothold in leadership education then, the following problematic situation arises. To be able to do so they have to become invisible as literary researchers; they should not let literary research interfere with would-be leaders' direct encounters with great literary texts. They should not question the assumptions under which this encounter is understood to be most effective (the three points above), though they have been trained to do so as literary researchers. However, since they cannot claim pedagogic authority in terms of specialism in (or experience of) business management, as the above-named authors can, they do have to find their place *as* literary researchers. In brief, they have to deal with a somewhat paradoxical strategy so as to contribute to leadership education: *they have to become invisible as literary researchers while making authoritative (and authorizing) use of their knowledge as literary researchers.*

But entrepreneurial literary researchers should not give up. In the 1993 film *Jurassic Park*, the following exchange occurs between a CEO (John) and a couple of scientists:

*Ian Malcolm:* John, the kind of control you're attempting simply is... it's not possible. If there is one thing the history of evolution has taught us it's that life will not be contained. Life breaks free, it expands to new territories and crashes through barriers, painfully, maybe even dangerously, but... well, there it is.

*John Hammond:* [unconvinced] There it is.

*Henry Wu:* You're implying that a group composed entirely of female animals will... breed?

*Ian Malcolm:* No. I'm, I'm simply saying that life... finds a way.

Entrepreneurial literary researchers should have a similar conviction in enterprise – enterprise finds a way, often despite leaders.

In this context, it is worth contemplating an encouraging performance by a literature professor who is also an experienced academic leader, Rick Rylance. Rylance is a professor of English Literature. He has been Head of School in Exeter University and is now the Director of London University's Institute of English Studies. He has also been a leading policy maker as chief executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and chair of the Research Councils UK executive group. His admirable little book, *Literature and the Public Good* (2016), is instructive for all entrepreneurial literary researchers. It presents a case for regarding literature as a public good, understanding the 'public good' in terms which

resonate with mine (see I.6, “Research for the Public Good”), though more inclusively expressed. According to Rylance:

The word ‘good’ can mean several things in this context. It can be a positive evaluative category when used adjectively (‘a good book’ for example); it can mean a public benefit (‘the public good’ itself is an example); and it can be a commodity, as in ‘sale of goods’ or those signs that read ‘inward goods’ for delivery drivers. (Rylance 2016: 131)

And further:

Literature [...] is something that unites the three senses of ‘good’ in modern societies [...]. A ‘good book’ – esteemed, valued, worth recommending or studying – feeds into a ‘public good’ – creating and transmitting a shared culture and stimulating thought, ideas, and exchange – by way of being an accessible ‘good’ acquired through the various outlets by which our society circulates its material things. (135)

Thus, ingeniously, the different senses of ‘good’ are brought together in contemplating literature by the circumstance of shared signification and yet without erasing their difference. [I wonder whether this works in languages other than English.]

The book performs (rather than rigidly reason through) its argument to persuade different constituencies of this happy conjunction of the meanings of ‘good’ in literature. The different constituencies involve: literary researchers, cultural industry entrepreneurs, government policy makers and academic leaders. To make his case for each, separately and together, he performs a weaving together of different authority-bearing voices. To convince literary researchers he speaks as one them, establishing his status by closely reading a W.B. Yeats poem, interpreting some novels and talking suavely of literary history – and thus vouches for the benefits to be had from literature. To persuade policy makers and academic leaders and cultural entrepreneurs he speaks as one of them: evincing a firm grasp of the economic advantages that literary products offer, and citing the data and reports to back that up – and thus vouches for literature’s profit-making record. To persuade the lay public (and this is particularly pleasing for leaders since it chimes with the three-fold approach of leadership education to literary texts), he gives them confident specialist backing for the importance of empathy in reading literature – he thus vouches for the benefits that all may elicit from literature.

The most instructive aspect of Rylance’s book is that it is, apart from a brief mention of student recruitment to literature departments, uninterested in academia. He simply does not pause on the existence of the University, of institutions employing literary researchers and teachers, of



professional structures for literary scholarship. Academia is evidently irrelevant to professing literature and being an academic leader and policy maker. Rylance mediates directly between literature and the constituencies he addresses, as a professor and as a leader and yet – where and of what? *The University is invisible in this argument-performance.*

There is a lesson to be learned by entrepreneurial literary researchers seeking an edge in leadership education from this brilliant performance. Somewhere in Rylance's book there are clues about how to become entrepreneurially invisible as a literary researcher and yet exert authority as such. It has something to do with making the University and its structuring assumptions invisible when necessary, for a given constituency. However, I have not fully worked this out yet – I am still thinking about it.

## 57. Freed and Leaderless

*Suman Gupta*

Alexander's observations on leaders and leadership education reveal a sceptical disposition which I would not have suspected in a neoliberal thinker. But, on reflection, it also makes sense. Do neoliberals really take the claims now made everywhere on behalf of leadership seriously? Neoliberals make the claims, use the claims, but that does not mean they take them seriously. Alexander has himself been making these claims often enough above: how leaders in the University and Ministry have far-sightedly organised matters so that the entrepreneurial public good is served. He has often assumed an upbeat tone when he talked of leaders. But, looking back, he has also courted a slight irony at times (difficult to tell whether intended) in various observations on leadership – for instance, in relation to the 'universalisation of leadership' (see I.10, "Changes and Futures"), and especially in this part. There is some difference between making, using and cheering for the claims of leadership and actually taking them seriously. Perhaps real power is exercised where assertions of leadership are not needed; leadership education might well be an entrepreneurial con.

Claims of the salience of leadership are, possibly, used to incentivise and instrumentalise certain needy persons to work for entrepreneurial ends within well-defined constraints, as cogs in the machine. That makes sense when I consider the steady proliferation of 'leadership roles' and 'senior management positions' in the University, marked by titles with words like 'Director,' 'Executive,' 'Chief,' 'Manager,' 'Head,' etc. in them. If they all think of themselves as leaders then there might well be more leaders than followers in the University now. This means that they are probably all obedient followers, whose obedience is secured by making them believe that they are leaders.

Alexander's observations do not delve the real power that super-senior-top leaders in any organisation do exercise. Even if the relationship between what they do and the profit making of organisations is actually always unclear (as Alexander notes), what they do does have tractable effects on lives and livelihoods within organisations. There may well be other quieter machinations of power working on the leaders themselves

(perhaps from boards of trustees, executive boardrooms, ministries), but their own voluble exercise of coercive power in organisations is usually material enough. It should be possible to set up leadership-coercion indexes by following Alexander's metrics and modelling methods. To what extent do super-senior-top leaders constrain freedom of productive activity? Or, institute strangling accounting practices and form-filling exercises? Or, impose pointless restructurings and transformations in the name of 'embracing change'? Or, contribute to anxiety and insecurity? Or, extend unnecessary surveillance mechanisms? Or, cultivate a sucking-up and petty-bullying culture? Or, fire off threatening tweets at midnight?

In fact, a rigorous leadership-coercion index might encourage all – the public, low to middle level workers in organisations, boards of trustees and executive bodies of organisations, the University and Ministry – to reduce the role of super-senior-top leaders. The project of liberating the leaders could start with, say, CEOs. That is to say, following my argument in II.42, "The Shrinking Teacher and Pedagogical AI," replacing super-senior-top leaders to a necessary extent with AI might be a reasonable way forward, helping them towards joining the ranks of freed human beings.

There are very good reasons for pursuing a project of replacing super-senior-top leaders with AI as far as possible. (1) These leaders are the most expensive part of the employment market, so any savings made there are likely to be substantial. (2) Any misstep made by a leader has large-scale and adverse economic consequences for a given organisation (and often beyond organisations), so using AI resources to minimise the risk of missteps will have a salutary economic impact. (3) The human proclivity to wilfully coerce and exert irrational power, and tendency towards corruption, could be significantly reduced; leadership AI can always be programmed and reset accordingly. (4) Through leadership education texts and programmes there have emerged a steady set of routinized initiatives, responses and behaviours in given organisational systems (according to specific variables) which describe most leadership functions – it should be possible to model these. (5) A great deal of effective leadership functions depend on having sufficiently broad information processing and assimilation abilities, which could be bettered by integrating AI with leadership. (5) In the liberal justice system there is already a model of governance by primary adherence to objective principles and only conditionally to subjective judgments (rule of law) – this can be automatized to a significant extent and rendered effective in all organisational spheres.

Eventually the entrepreneurial rationale of AI may erase the differences between leaders and followers among us, and realise the potential of freed *and leaderless* human beings. Perhaps the full scope of literary research can only be conceptualised with the horizon of freed and leaderless human beings before us.

## Appendix

Suman Gupta, 'Seven Phases' (May 2015)

Here I try to articulate seven broad and consecutive phases in engineering the relationship between academic work and conditions for that work in the context of liberal economies. These phases rationalise academic work in cost-benefit accounting terms. Arguably such phases are being – have been – unrolled in some such order very widely in different countries, increasingly globally. Though some are perhaps further along the line of such phases than others, almost all are converging on their direction.

A significant part of academic work is by nature introspective and relatively intractable in terms of time/resources/outlay: such as preparing for teaching, consulting research sources and conducting experiments, reading and writing, engaging in conversations, etc. Tractability typically attaches to what is externalised after the introspective process: lectures and tutorials, conference presentations, consultancies, publications, data-sets, patents, employable graduates, etc.

Setting the conditions of academic work involves making calculations of tractability, which in turn depend on various ideological subscriptions within the liberal fold. Other kinds of ideological subscriptions may have actuated different calculations (sometimes intrusions) in various contexts, especially in the past, but (shifting) liberal subscriptions along the line of the phases below are now globally discernible.

With these very general propositions in mind, the following phases in engineering the relationship between academic work and the conditions thereof can be outlined.

*Phase 1:* Academic work as a whole – both introspective process and externalised product – in all its dimensions is regarded as a public good, and is conducted accordingly in all academic institutions (however funded, but thereby particularly justifying state or public funding). It is held that the precise character of the public benefit cannot necessarily be accounted strictly in terms of specific externalised products at any given time: it is impossible to predict when and where the benefit of some product will become apparent (if it exists it may come to be useful in expected and unexpected ways). But a long view of the contribution of academic work to social development shows a salutary, indeed inextricable, relationship. Further, an intractable (that is, free and open) introspective process is

considered necessary for the realisation of the externalised product, and those engaging in academic work are best placed to manage the conditions for such work – so, a high degree of academic self-determination in managing the conditions of academic work is desirable. Typically, this means that the intractable introspective process is allowed reasonable free play and kept outside strict accounting; the latter is confined to even-handed distribution of the more tractable externalised production among workers (especially teaching and administration). To regulate productivity, systems for informing academic workers of expectations, incentives to encourage effort and productivity (promotions, increments, etc.), peer-reviewing and external-peer-assessing at every stage, and disincentives for poor work (appeals procedures and disciplinary procedures, etc.) suffice.

*Phase 2:* It is soon argued (to begin with by those administering government budgets) that academic work should not be considered a public good without accountable evidence thereof: i.e. every investment made by a putative public (whether through states or other entities, including private) in academic work should be tractably accounted in terms of benefits to the public. Academic self-determination of the conditions of academic work is not questioned; but academies are now required to become ‘professional’ and tractable in ways that can be recorded by, for instance, auditors and bureaucrats and ministers. In the first instance, this means creating more disaggregated and stable measurements of the relatively tractable exteriorised products – i.e. measurements which comply with existing, albeit so far loose and unsystematised, academic values and norms. Thus, specific exteriorised products begin to be subjected regularly to certain strict evaluative measures, effectively withdrawing the notion that their public benefits are impossible to affix firmly at any given point of time. So, firm measures of scholarly importance, influence, esteem, impact and so on for activities like teaching and research (measures of ‘quality’) are instituted, such as can ostensibly be immediately gauged through some regular bureaucratic procedure. The principle of academic self-determination is maintained by keeping such disaggregated measuring and accounting of exteriorised products at the behest of ‘peer-reviewing,’ which is given the character of a bureaucratic accounting procedure.

*Phase 3:* Once the value of the exteriorised product is thus disaggregated according to firm ‘quality’ measures, the introspective process preceding it becomes open to tracking too. The introspective process is then broken down into parts, and each part is given a value in accordance with the value attributed to the exteriorised products that putatively derive from it. So, the cost of time for teaching preparation is considered as measurable against the measured quality of the tractable teaching done (affixed by

consulting peers and students, from recruitment figures, etc.); the cost of time for reading, writing, experimenting, discussing, etc. is considered as measurable against the measured quality of publications produced (affixed by consulting peers, checking 'bibliometrics,' creating indexes of 'prestige,' etc.); and so on. Gradually, therefore, the conditions for academic work are revised. Now, instead of allowing free play for introspection and even-handed distribution of tractable exteriorised products, the apparently disaggregated parts of the introspective process are themselves made subject to accounting. That, in turn, allows for calculations and trade-offs in terms of the 'quality' of the exteriorised product that is likely to follow at any given time. That what is 'likely to follow' is itself an intractable variant is too obvious a weakness in this accounting process: so, measures of probability of performance according to each worker's record are generated and factored in to make this shaky variant appear measurable. It makes for a more atomised academic sector as workers and institutions bargain with and calculate against each other to obtain the most advantageous performance records and trade-offs.

*Phase 4:* The disaggregation of both the exteriorised product and introspective process of academic work, and the generation of performance records, is then brought to bear upon the further fashioning of conditions for academic work through two crucial steps. *Step one:* it is deemed that the accounting practices invented through Phases 2 and 3 are an area of specialisation which demands too much time and effort, interferes too deeply into the core of academic work (teaching and research), to be left in the hands of academics as self-managers of their working conditions. So, a professional management stratum is inserted into academia, partly by co-optation from within and partly by recruitment from without. It comes under the guise of 'academic leadership' as a specialised and discrete role. The job of this management stratum is no longer justified by its understanding of the relation between introspection and exteriorisation in academic work. Instead, its role consists in taking charge of the accounting practices invented through Phases 2 and 3, and it is soon given (or wrests) the power to engineer all aspects of academic work so that such book-keeping could be conducted to optimise the use of investments (costs of time, resources, outlay, etc.). The measures of performance put in place for this stratum itself has no relation to academic work. These managerial performance measures derive from comparisons (typically of institutions and sectors) of success in optimising use of investments, and in ensuring the compliance of academic workers and manipulation of academic work for that purpose. The obvious way of doing the latter is by upping the pressure of atomisation and competitiveness mentioned at the end of Phase 3: introducing targets for exteriorised production and accordingly

rationalising the distribution of parts of the introspective process – and thereby, trying to influence the record of predictable performance (which easily translates into behaviour profiles for workers).

*Phase 5: Step two*, which follows on the heels of step one in Phase 4, involves taking the measurements of value put in place in Phases 2 and 3 largely out of the hands of academic self-assessment (peer assessment) and passing it on to external representatives of the so-called public, which is often now the same as agents of private interests ('stakeholders' in short – employers, industrialists, community leaders, political bosses, bureaucrats, etc.). This is aided, indeed motivated, by step one: the management stratum, isolated from academic workers and with license to act upon them, often has aligned interests (in cost-benefit accounting terms) with such non-academic stakeholders and find them useful for pressuring and extracting compliance from academic workers. The management stratum is able to argue that the public benefits of academic work can only be attested disinterestedly from outside academia by such stakeholders: e.g. employers can testify whether the teaching done is useful in producing a workforce outside academia; community leaders can testify whether teaching and research is producing social stability and development; corporations can bear witness to the contribution of teaching and research to business development. By this stage, almost all of the justification for public – i.e. state – funding of academic work has evaporated. Academic workers come to be regarded as a part of the 'human resources' (a small part of the gross resources) and as 'service-providers' of institutions, and students along with other 'stakeholders' become 'clients' or 'consumers.'

*Phase 6:* The next move is inevitable: the disaggregated measures invented to render exteriorised product and introspective process tractable in Phases 2 and 3, initially in keeping with academic values and norms, are modified to align with these 'stakeholder' interests. So, incremental adjustments in those measures can now be used to not merely keep track of the exteriorised product and the introspective process but to change and direct those. So, for instance, now teaching has to be designed to produce skilled workers for particular sectors of employment, research has to be undertaken to produce innovation in industry or encourage political harmony. The thrust of academic work is now not considered in the service of a public good in the broad sense, but as an instrument of dominant and conservative (i.e. determined to preserve themselves) alignments which claim to represent and embody and dictate the public good (that they are able to do so make them dominant). Typically, this phase involves a culling of academic workers who continue to adhere to what they consider key to an academic identity (freedom of introspection

followed by exteriorisation), and increased recruitment of workers who are able to accommodate their academic instrumentality with those dominant and conservative alignments. These moves are presented as progressive and inevitable, and managed under the guise of ‘strategic management,’ ‘forward planning,’ ‘restructuring,’ ‘efficiency measures,’ etc. Gradually, the introspective process which is the starting point of academic work and the academic worker’s *raison d’être* is itself taken over and directed from without; a kind of thought-control seems to be exercised which annuls the impetus of what was understood as academic work in Phase 1.

*Phase 7:* The identity of academia -- academic workers’ understanding of academic life -- begins to fragment; so that ‘what is a university?’ and ‘what is an academic?’ appear to be increasingly rhetorical and old-fashioned questions. Academic institutions and workers are gradually replaced by large or small organisations peopled with service providers, under the control of various split management strata, sometimes as a federation under a super-management stratum for a large so-called ‘university.’ All these organisations and service providers that constitute the so-called ‘university’ are now geared up for training personnel and utility-based knowledge production to serve different dominant interest groups of society (not really the ‘public’ in general any longer, but social alignments like corporations, state-policing-and-publicity units, community groups, consumer associations and the like). Some elite parts in this so-called ‘university’ (which still appear to bear a resemblance to academic institutions of Phase 1) also generate knowledge and instruction for scholarly hobbyists who can pay for their intellectual pleasures. At this point, any pretence of academic work being regarded as a public good can gradually be withdrawn, and former commitments to public investment (especially direct state funding) reduced to a mote. Academic institutions are now fragmented bodies, parts of which are outsourced, and parts of which remain as self-funding and profit-making components of a range of establishment interest groups (government, corporate, non-government, which are represented by ‘stakeholders’ in academic boardrooms) which finance them according to their own needs. The ultimate aim of such federations, each controlled by a complex management stratum in synch with their ‘stakeholders’, is to offer a flexible and obedient means for generating economic growth and social stability to serve dominant interests.

In the UK, I think, we are somewhere between Phases 6 and 7; in a few so-called ‘modernizing’ contexts academia is still at Phases 2 or 3, or is leaping ahead eagerly towards Phase 4.

Akin to the rationale sketched above, the broad outlines of contemporary liberal cost-benefit accounting was laid out, with unusual prescience,



in Michel Foucault's 1979 Collège de France lectures published as *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2004/in English 2008). The lectures referred to a much broader field, which Foucault dubbed 'biopolitics,' wherein such cost-benefit accounting practices have become a naturalised and pervasive grounding for liberal 'governmentality' – within conjugal partnerships, conceiving and raising children, property and employment relations, the penal system, etc. Under the sway of liberal governmentality, Foucault observed, individuals become entrepreneurs of themselves, constantly realising themselves and advancing their interests and confirming their existence through cost-benefit accounting. As far as the academy goes, anxiety spreads because the academic self that academic workers seek to realise, promote, sustain and confirm is slipping away – is ceasing to be recognised, seems to be falling unnoticed into a black hole. The core of the academic self – grounded in the freedom of introspection and consequent exteriorisation – is slipping away; or rather, introspection is gripped by extrinsic thought-control and exteriorisation squeezed by constraints of permissibility. Even on the superficial surface of academic life, markers of value and integrity in thinking and practice, communal rites of mutual recognition and acknowledgement, gauges of effort and aspiration have been redefined out of existence. All these have been redefined into something that the academic worker is unable to identify with.

From the posting 'The Busyness of Academics,' May 2015, *Comment and Debate* page of the project website *Framing Financial Crisis and Protest: North-West and South-East Europe*. <http://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/finance-crisis-protest/comment-and-debate/busyness-academics>

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